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"Samatter witches?" you'd say.

OUR TOWN

BY
EUGENE WOOD
Author of "Back Home"

Illustrated by
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RICHARD G. BADGER
The Gorham Press
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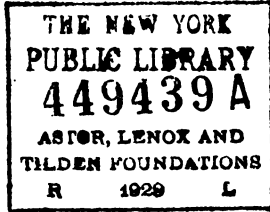
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TO
THE FOLKS OF
OUR TOWN

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THE GLORIOUS FOURTH

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THE GLORIOUS FOURTH

THEY say every dog has his day. I don't remember just when the dog-days come — some time in hot weather, I believe — but I'll swear the Fourth of July isn't one of them.

I never had a hunting-dog, so I am prepared to believe that one of them might put up with the boisterous noises that gunpowder makes. Perhaps he might even come to find that the shotgun's disconcerting bang! which at first made him jump part way out of his hide, imparted to his nerves a titillating rasp, very desirable. But when I consider the Fourth of July as related to dogs I have in mind the ordinary four-legged garbage-can, the dear companion of our youth, Maje, or Tige, or Bounce, or Gyp, or Fido, or Spot, or whatever he was named, that long ago has gone before us in the way we too must walk one day. Poor old dog! When he laid his muz-

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zle on our knee, and looked so longingly at us with his big brown eyes, I know his soul flung itself despairingly at the thin partition of speechlessness that separated him from us. Poor old dog! He was neither useful nor ornamental. He was just a hanger-on, and could pay for his keep only with his company, but he was none the less beloved for all that. Lots of men have no better excuse for being.

On other feasts and fasts, when anything was going on, he was right there, Johnny-on-the-Spot, close to the footlights in the center of the stage, but on the Nation's Birthday his native modesty asserted itself and he withdrew from public gaze.

"How would it be," we asked each other after the first few firecrackers, when an awfully funny notion struck us, "how would it be if we took and tied —" The knowing look passed from eye to eye. "Where is he? H-yuh Spot! H-yuh Spot! H-yuh! H-yuh! Whoo-eet!"

Wouldn't he act funny, though? He wouldn't know what struck him. H-yuh Spot! Why, where was the darn dog?

THE GLORIOUS FOURTH

For he came not bounding to us, wiping his paws on our clean waists that our Ma had put on us that day with: "Now, don't burn any holes in that," and "Don't you get it to looking like a mop inside of five minutes." He did not leap upon us, licking our faces in moist caress. We hunted him high and low.

"H-yuh Spot! H-yuh Spot! — The barn! Betchy anything he's in under the barn."

We sought the hole he usually crawled in. Away, 'way over in the far corner we made out two flaming red disks, that bashfully averted themselves when we began our blandishments.

"Noi-oi-oice old doggie! Ya-a-ase, he was a noice old fellah. *Come* here. *Come* here." In vain we fluted the word "Come" and expressed an almost tearful affection. We could hear his tail thump, and he whined as much as to say he'd like awfully to oblige, but really we'd have to excuse him this time.

Now, what I want to know is: What put him wise to what we were up to? Was it talked around in dog society about firecrackers tied to

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tails? There was a forsaken, homeless fice came down South Main Street on a Fourth, and made friends with a fellow in front of Ryan's place, a fellow with a keen sense of humor, who would sacrifice a whole pack of firecrackers as lief as not. Well, sir, that dog just about tore up the earth getting away from there when the popping began. He banged into everything, and squalled "Ah-oop! Ah-oop!" in shrill falsetto. The funniest thing you ever heard of. Aaron Williams, who kept the tin-shop, like to hurt himself laughing. He screamed, and slapped his legs, and stamped on the ground in an ecstasy of mirth. The fice crawled under the tin-shop (which was right next to the cooper-shop) and it promptly took fire and burned to the ground. Aaron laughed out of the other side of his mouth at that.

But, even suppose Spot had heard talk of that, how could he remember? It's a mighty long time from one Fourth of July to another, I'll have you understand. (Or at least it used to be so. It's got so now they whiz a-past so fast you get a crick in the neck from watching them.) Why should



And will blow on it to see.

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a dog remember that firecrackers are dangerous things, when a boy can't? I'll bet you any money that this coming Fourth there'll be at least half a dozen boys who will wonder (all new, as if it had never been done before) if the fuse of a giant firecracker hasn't gone out, and will blow on it to see, and will find it hasn't gone out, and — well, don't let's begin the horrible part of it so soon.

Only, I marvel why Spot should have crawled under the barn before the day got really good and going.

And, now that I think of it, I don't remember seeing much of the cat on that day either. Come anywhere near him ordinarily, and he would thin his body upward, and rub his hairs off on your leg, purring like a coffee-mill, but if you saw him this day, he was all scrooched up, and gave you a malignant glare, as much as to say: "You're the young divvle that tied my feet up in papers, ain't ye? You dast to lay a hand on me —" And as you took one step toward him, he was gone like lightning in a cloud.

I seem to recollect a buggy splintered and slid-

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ing on its side, with a man dragged by the lines, his face as white as putty except for a thin trickle of blood on the forehead. It seems to me I smell firecrackers as I see this, but whether in memory or imagination I cannot say for certain. Nevertheless, I believe that dogs and cats and horses and Mas do not approve of the Glorious Fourth.

However it might be with them, it was certainly the Day of Days for the rest of us. Other festivals connoted hatreds of the other fellows, penning the flock off into little coops of ancient religious and racial spats and feuds. But on Our Country's Birthday all these partitions and spite-fences came down. Rich and poor, high and low, white and black, Republican and Democrat, Jew and Gentile, Catholic and Protestant, native-born and foreign-born forgot for once their petty anti-social meannesses, and joined in the celebration of the day whereon a whole people cried out in the hearing of an unbelieving world that God had made all men free and equal, and bestowed upon them rights that cannot be bargained away or

THE GLORIOUS FOURTH

overridden by force—the rights to life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Everywhere floated the Flag “whose banners make tyranny tremble,” and in every home Ma tied up burnt fingers with apple-butter and a rag.

It is fine to think that upon this day, all over this broad land of ours, we lay aside our business and pay our homage to a doctrine that we respect even if we do think it is too righteous to be practical. “All over this broad land,” did I say? Ah, me! I wish it were so. But they tell me that in southern Indiana Fourth of July is little thought of, not half so much as the Annual Celebration of the Morehead Settlement, whatever that may be. They shut up the stores, it's true, but they save their shooting crackers and their fireworks for Christmas Day! For Christmas Day! Isn't that Hoosier for you? Why, punk-sticks and scraps of red paper smoldering in the gutter, and empty Roman candle tubes that you can blow on like a bottle belong in hot weather, not when there's snow on the ground. They can't make me think Indiana is really civilized, I don't care

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how many literary geniuses come from there, when the people act like that.

Speaking of Christmas Day, Fourth of July resembles it in just one respect, early rising. On Christmas Day you want to; on Fourth of July you have to. You may be having ever so thrilling a dream; you may be clinging by finger-hold to the slanting top of a granite cliff nine miles high, and polished like Colonel Hoosey's monument in the cemetery. You can't go on with your dream after that vociferous "Boong!" that rattles on your windows just before sunup. "Yes!" you cry, "I'm up!" your daily lie, this morning utterly unnecessary, as you sheepishly realize the moment after. It's a waste of time to try to turn over for another nap. In the early days of our Republic you might have counted off thirteen loud "Boongs" and composed yourself for more slides over the edges of granite cliffs; but now that there are — How many are there now? Be-switched if I can keep track of 'em.

And, by the way, did you know that one Fourth they wouldn't shoot off but twelve guns? The

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old Confederation had petered out, and all but little Rhody had come under the "new roof" of the Constitution. In those days there wasn't any Senator Aldrich to hold the rest of the country up by the tail, and the other folks were pretty hot about such carryings-on. If little Rhody hadn't come right down off her perch, and acted white in a hurry, they were going to put up tariff walls against her goods, and let her flock all by herself and see how she liked it.

In the matter of our national salute at dawn I feel a sense of deep personal humiliation. Other people can tell you interesting stories about the cannon they had in their town "back home," and how there was a rivalry between the Hill crowd and the Valley crowd as to which should get hold of it, and hide it from the others. They can tell you all about Who's-this-now that was in such a hurry he didn't swab out the gun good, and when What's-his-name was ramming home the charge, blamed if she didn't go off, ker-boong! and there was his arm gone, slick as a whistle. And they felt so terrible that they went away

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and left the cannon, and the other fellows got it and kept it for two years. *Two years!* What do you think of that? We didn't have any cannon. Kind of a one-horse place, I'm afraid. And even if we had had one, my folks wouldn't have let me have anything to do with it. (I never had any kind of a time at all.) To this day, I don't know the first thing about loading up an anvil and shooting it off on the Fourth of July. I don't even know which is the trigger end of an anvil.

But I'm fairly well posted on firecrackers, little square flat packs, you know, with a thin red paper stuck on, stamped with a gilt dragon and funny letters that didn't spell anything. Each of us got a whole single pack and two punk-sticks, and that had to last out the day. Down-town after dark, wild fellows that had lots of money to spend used to set off a whole pack at a time. That was reckless extravagance, but it was splendid on that account. Who cares for ten cents? Plenty more where that came from! And to hear the snapping like corn in a popper, only more so, and to see the flashes of light in the darkness, jerking

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this way and that! Gur-reat! Great! And, after you'd think the whole pack was gone, there'd be one solitary snap as much as to say: "Here! I'm in this too. You don't want to overlook me." It was great. There's no two ways about it; it was great. But that was for the evening and somebody else. In the morning we had our own firecrackers while our enthusiasm still had a cutting edge, and we were careful in disentangling the crackers' little tails from the braided fuse with which they interwove. When we shot one off it was with a screwed-up wincing face and we tasted a fearful joy. We used to heap up forts of dust, and p'tend the cannons were pointing out through "embrasures." (They had "embrasures" in "The History of the Great Rebellion.") The worst of it was that the siege-guns would destroy the illusion by all coming apart. If you broke off the end of one and touched the punk-stick to the black dust in the muzzle of the gun it would shoot out fire just as in the picture of the Monitor and the Merrimac, but it was only a "fizzer," and anyhow you don't touch off a real cannon from the

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front end. Still, you could piece out a good deal with imagination, and, after all, that's where the fun comes in. I pity the poor young ones these days that have toys and playthings that look exactly like real things.

It was also kind of exciting to stand on a fire-cracker and feel the pleasant jolt it gave when it exploded. That is, it was pleasant if you had shoes on; it kind o' stung if you were barefooted.

And you could light one and hold it in your fingers until je-e-e-est the last fractional part of a second when the fuse was beginning to act hysterical and fidgety, and then you flung it up high and it was "the bomb bursting in air," as it says in the "Star-spangled Banner." Out of this practise developed a test of heroism similar in spirit to the sun-dance of the Indian braves. You held one in your fingers (as far off as you could, and with your eyes all squinched up) and felt the shivers running all over you as the fuse began to sputter, and when you lived through the shock of the explosion, how happy you were! That called



You felt the shivers running all over you.



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for real courage, and in some cases, if I mistake not, it called for witch-hazel too.

And there was an intellectual problem in connection with firecrackers. Why was there one in the pack sometimes that was wrapped with green paper instead of red? I have puzzled over that no little, and it still remains the dark mystery it always was. What was there about it that deserved the green paper? It wasn't louder than the others; it wasn't weaker than the others, for those who said it always was a fizzer generalized from insufficient data, as boys are wont to do. All our lives long we are jostled and elbowed by riddles we cannot solve, and this is one of them. Old Maje, who cannot talk, and we who cannot understand — we're all alike.

Firecrackers are the norm of Fourth of July. On the timid side, explosives shade off into the pink paper disks that your little brother shoots in a brown varnished cast-iron dummy pistol.

"Now don't you go pointing that at people," excitedly cries your mother.

"Aw! That cain't shoot nothin'," you explain,

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scandalized at her crass ignorance. "Can't you see it don't go through from the cap place to the barrel?"

"You don't know what might happen," she persists, in her unreasoning way. "You hear tell of lots of people getting killed with guns that *weren't* loaded. What ever possessed you, Pa, to go and get that boy a *pistol* beats me. You know he just delights in running headlong into danger. It would serve you right if he was marked for life with that thing. Mercy me! I'll be glad when this day's over. Elsie! Come here to me. Come away from that firecracker."

(Women are awful foolish. They haven't got near the sense of us men-folks.)

Elsie, in her Stars-and-Stripes frock, has these twisted white paper torpedoes, that crack when you throw them hard down on the sidewalk. They're very nearly as loud as a parlor match and a little safer. They fretted your mother as much as the firecrackers though; they mussed up the place so. There's nothing that makes a front



Elsie, in her stars-and-stripes dress.

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porch look so slack as scraps of paper and little bits of gravel.

Beyond the firecracker on the bold side was the bottle of powder. With that you could lay a train to where you had poured out quite a little heap of powder and covered it with dirt. That was a rebel fort you were going to blow up. It's fine sport, and if you should ever meet a man with a glass eye and a lot of blue specks in his face, you ask him if he doesn't think so, for it is almost certain that he played that very game when he was young.

But away, 'way out on the bold side is the revolver. Not one of these brown varnished cast-iron things where it doesn't go through from the cap place to the barrel, but the real thing, a revolver that you can put real "cattridges" in made out of real lead bullets, one that you can kill people with, and can carry around in your hip-pocket. It must give a fellow a lot of moral courage to have one. You could bend down the front of your Johnny Jones hat, and smack it up behind, and kind of slouch it over one eye, and you'd rock

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your head a little from side to side, and talk out of the corner of your mouth. "Samatter witches?" you'd say. Just like that. And if anybody got too gay or anything, you wouldn't have to call out: "Quit now! Quit, I tell you. Now you just leave me be!" No. You'd smile a baleful smile, and press the cold ring of the muzzle into his quivering flesh and coldly remark: "That'll be about all from you. Un'stand?" And he'd understand right away.

Why, talk about learning how to box so as to be able to protect yourself, a revolver has the manly art of self-defense beaten to a stiff froth. I don't care how handy with your fists you might be, the other fellow might be handier, or he might be bigger, or he mightn't fight according to the Marquis of Queensbury. And anyways, you'd be sure to be rumped up some before you got through, your nose bleeding, or one eye a little puffy. But with the revolver you just go Bang! Bang! and there he is flat on the sidewalk.

Any day in the year a revolver is a fine thing for a boy to have, but especially is it a fine thing

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on the Fourth of July. It puts you right up where you belong, among the nobility and gentry. It takes you out of the ranks of mere kids that play with firecrackers. An old-maidish and fussy public opinion prescribes blank cartridges when one shoots to make the occasion gay with noise. I suppose it's well to defer for the sake of keeping out of trouble; but if it was me, I'd shoot real bullets. I should think it would sound nicer, and there'd be more excitement in it. I should try not to kill anybody, of course, but —

I don't know of anything that more effectively convinces the man who has grown up and come to New York to live that the country is going to the dogs as fast as the wheels of time can carry it than the horrifying discovery that the metropolitan young ones begin the firecracker season along about Decoration Day, and keep it up till some time in August. Well, maybe, it isn't quite as bad as that, but when you're positive that the country *is* going to the dogs, you've simply got to make your statements a leetle strong in order to arouse the people to their lost condition. And that the firecracker

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season should be prolonged by even so much as one day is enough to make any peace-loving citizen tremble for our institutions. Oh, my unhappy country! For anything they do in New York is sure to become all the go in the outlying districts one of these days. And then what will be the use in fixing your vacation so that you will get the Fourth out in the country? Why, in my day and time, a boy that would shoot off a firecracker on the third of July was a sneak. It was just as bad as peeking on a Christmas Eve. And a boy that would shoot off a firecracker on the fifth of July was green and behind the times. To be sure, if you happened to find in the dewy grass the next morning a firecracker with its fuse half-burnt, you were allowed to put it out of its misery, and a waif and stray you might set off. But that was only to prevent a wicked waste. It was on the same principle that you eat when you are so full you can hardly crowd it down; you suffer, so that the food won't have to be thrown away. But to deliberately buy shooting-crackers and set them off a day before or a day after the Fourth

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— The mind reels with horror from the bare suggestion. And yet such is the degeneracy of the age, they do that very thing in New York City year by year and never bat an eye.

Along about dinner-time — well, lunch-time, then, if you're possessed to put on airs; you know what I mean, noon — the day sort of petered out. The firecrackers were all gone, and excessively early rising was getting in its deadly work. But the main reason, I do believe, was the same that makes the grocery man put in only about two inches of sweet sugar on the top of the barrel, and fill up the rest with sugar that has a kind of bitterish, cloying taste. Nothing can be more delightful than an irregular series of sharp explosions; but it's like everything else, "there comes a time." If I were a free man, and could be as psychological as I dog-gone pleased, nothing would suit me better than to cut loose right here, and show you the cause of this tendency on the part of metropolitan children to prolong the excitement of the firecracker season; how, deprived as they are of all the fun that they really ought to

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have, they seek violent and unwholesome stimulation; and to point out that I wasn't altogether fooling when I talked about the degeneracy of the age. But they dock my pay every time I get serious. So you'll have to figure it out for yourself, or else read about it in some big book with "subjective" and "objective" and "telic" and "genetic" and all such cruel and unusual words in it.

The afternoon of the Fourth of July has a strong tendency to be poky. To avert this catastrophe many devices have been introduced. One of them is to have a picnic. Now, there are two opposing and mutually exclusive schools of thought *in re* the Fourth of July picnic. The one school holds that it always rains on that afternoon; the other denies that proposition, and maintains that those who so vividly recall standing under a tree — a tree as a shelter when it rains pitchforks and feather-beds is the rankest kind of a swindle, and something ought to be done about it — standing under a leaky tree and watching "the little men" jumping in the lemonade-tub while the

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table-cloths soak into sodden rags, and the layer cake pitifully dissolves, are really thinking of the annual Sabbath-school picnic, when of course it rains. I dislike very much to take sides on any question. I am like the politician who was campaigning in a neighborhood divided on entirely non-political lines into two parties, one maintaining that it was just foolishness to say that the earth turned clear over every day, and the other that it must be so because it said so in the geography book. "You know about such things," they asked him. "Now, does it? It don't, does it? Not clear over?"

"Well. . . . Ha! . . . It does a little," he said.

I will concede this much: That in view of the grea-eat concussion of the atmosphere on the Glorious Fourth, due to the well-nigh universal explosion of firecrackers, cap-pistols, anvils, and all such, it is not antecedently impossible — mark my words — it is not antecedently impossible that here and there *some* rain might be joggled loose from whatever it is stuck to up there in the sky.

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And if the picnic were announced for a considerable period of time beforehand, I think it extremely likely that it would rain. If it was got up on short notice, why, the weather might be taken by surprise and so not be able to squeeze out a shower. Still, I shouldn't like to commit myself either way. I'm only telling you.

I suppose that away back in the early days they had regular celebrations of the day in which the school children took part and sang the grand old patriotic airs, of which we know the tune but not the words. Indeed, in the song-book they had in the schools there was a piece that seemed to have been made on purpose for the Fourth of July. The Continental Congress wouldn't let a living soul know what was going on, but the people felt kind of interested to know whether or not they were to be broken off from the old country, it being a hanging matter, and so the Congress strained a point and agreed to have the bell rung in case the Declaration was passed. Now, away, 'way up in the belfry (and if you've ever been in Independence Hall you know it is a terribly tall

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building — I guess, anyways, three stories tall
without the belfry) there was the sexton and —
But I'd better quote a verse of the song:

High in the belfry the old sexton stands,
Grasping the rope in his thin, bony hands;
Fixed is his gaze, as by some magic spell,
Till he hears the welcome tidings: "Ring, ring the bell!"

CHORUS—"Ring the bell, grandpa! Ring! Ring!
Ring!"

Yes, yes, the good news is now on the wing.
Yes, yes, they come! And with tidings to tell,
Glorious and blessed tidings! "Ring, ring the bell!"

You see, it was his little grandson that told him
when to ring, and — well, it was a nice song,
but we never got a chance to sing it on the Fourth
of July, because school was let out then, and they
never had regular doings on that day, "back
home."

Oh, yes, they did too. Now that I think of it,
they did celebrate the Birthday of the Nation once
by a regular program. They had a sack race, and
a three-legged race, and a potato race, and a fat
men's race, and a slow race, and a ladies' race,

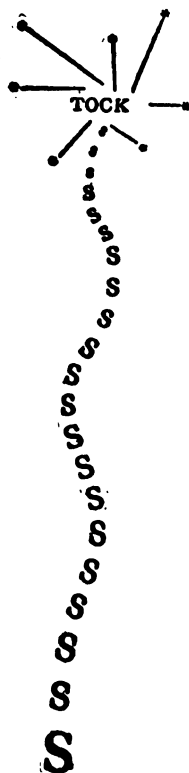
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which is not the same thing as a slow race. And they chased the greased pig, which was funny because the pig was thoroughly excited, and squealed hysterically, and tripped people up and played hob generally. And they had climbing the greased pole, which wasn't nearly as funny as you'd think it would be. And the band played and played and played till, when it was all over, not one of them except the two men on the battery could have whistled if it was to save his life. Hadn't any lip. Or rather they had too much lip, for every horn-player's mouth looked as if it had been stepped on and had had time to swell. It was a grand time, and the *Examiner* said it was "a celebration worthy of the festive occasion."

I forgot whether they had strawberry shortcake that night for supper or not. That's kind of stupefying, you know. Anyhow there was something we could eat a lot of, something that made a snug fit for our appetites after such a busy day, so that after dark began to fall, it seemed a long, long time since we had jumped to hear the window-rattling "Boong!"

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of the first gun of the national salute. Pap gave us an imitation of a skyrocket by knocking the dottle from his pipe, and pretty soon away off down-town the real rockets began to garter-snake their upward way through the air, opening up when they had climbed their height, and flinging colored jewels by the reckless handful, red, and green, and blue and white, sometimes broadcast, and sometimes strung upon a thread, as it were, a broken necklace on the dusky bosom of the night. For a while we wondered at the sheer beauty of it all, and then a little longer we amused ourselves with mimicking them, "*s-s-s Tock! Look out for the stick!*" But more and more the lovely vision melted into reverie. The fire balloons drifted farther and farther, low-hanging, flickering stars that seemed to beckon



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our ambition toward the conquest of the kingdom of the air. . . . We sighed . . . we longed with longing, somehow gently sad until — until —

“Here, mister! Time for you to be in bed. Pillows a-hollerin’ for you.”

You may have noticed that I haven’t said a word about the public reading of the Declaration of Independence. It didn’t happen. Never in my life have I heard that read aloud, clear through. When that immortal statement was first put forth, nobody dreamed that those who worked for wages had any rights. In those cruel days, ere ever compassion had been born, the negro slave was better off than the poor wretch who owned no property. The ballot was later given to him grudgingly, but this government of ours didn’t become his and isn’t now. It isn’t meant to be. The way we live, the average wages of the men and women who take the raw earth that God Almighty gave to all His children for a heritage, and turn it into what we eat and wear and take our comfort from, the average

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wages of the men and women who put all the value into anything that has a value, is about \$400 a year. Some get more; more get less. Figure to yourself how much of life a man can have on \$400 a year; how much of liberty; how he can pursue happiness after his board and keep are paid for. In the census year of 1900 those who have only themselves to sell made in this country thirteen billions of dollars' worth of goods; out of that thirteen billion dollars' worth they got two billion dollars. Who got the other eleven billion dollars? I'll take my oath it wasn't George the Third. Cæsar had his Brutus, Charles his Cromwell, George the Third his Washington, and — if that be treason, make the most of it.

It didn't do to read the Declaration of Independence. It made folks uneasy. That Smith who had been rescued from the obscurity native to Smiths by his ferocious soubriquet of "Hell-roaring Jake" did the State some service when he described the Declaration of Independence as "a damned incendiary document." That's just what it is. Particularly that part where it says that

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whenever a government does not preserve to all the people their rights to life and liberty and happiness, it is about time to change the form of government and get the kind that will preserve them.

I think it would be a good thing to revive the practise of reading aloud the essay of that red-headed fiddler fellow from Virginia. It is 130 years old, I know, but it is so far from being out of date that these restless days of ours are the days when it is most likely to be realized in full.

On its inspiration we did the business for George the Third. It seems to me it's good for one more whirl.

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WHENEVER anybody begins to complain about "nowadays," we wink at those of our own generation and start in to be funny.

"Well, now, grandpap," we ask, with a roguish look at the others, "do you really think water is quite as wet now as it was in your young days?"

Because, you know, if anybody says that this present age is in any wise inferior to any age that ever went before — that it is not superior to all the ages that ever went before lumped in one lump, why, that's a sure sign that he is getting childish and failing very fast.

And yet we cannot talk long with those who linger with us for more than threescore years and ten ere we discover that something they had is lacking with us, something of which our children have scarce a glimmer.

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My old grandmother said to me one day: "Ah, they don't have the good times in religion that they used to have." It's a good joke, that about water not being as wet as it once was, but there are times when it just doesn't seem to come in quite right. Somehow it made me sigh as I bethought me of the protracted meetings I had been to when I was a little fellow — you went with me, don't you recollect? It might not have been in the same meeting-house, or the same town, or the same State, or the same year, and yet it was, too. It was in the old meeting-house "back home," and the time was just the same, "when we were little." And then I bethought me of a modern revival meeting I had attended but a short time before. When I compared the two, it seemed to me I understood how it was that the world to-day, so bright and active, scuttling across the landscape under the hissing trolley-wire, and glowing with the golden radiance and the violet splendor of electric lamps, should seem to the older ones a dull, gray world, no longer interesting, because no longer interested in what they

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deemed a far more vital matter than heaping together that which perishes with the using.

The protracted meeting I attended lately wasn't in a meeting-house, but in a church, a splendid structure, through whose pictured windows the sunlight shines on Sunday mornings. Cushioned pews semicircle on a slanting floor. Above the preacher's rostrum is a gallery with a valance, behind which, during the sermon, hide the four hired singers whose well-trained voices blend so smoothly.

The modern revival that I attended was not held in this spacious auditorium, but in a smaller basement room, where, I think, they hold the "donkey parties" and the "socials." Even this room was plenty large. No utter stranger came and threw his arms around my neck and asked me to go up to the mourners' bench. There was no mourners' bench. There was a row of orchestra chairs, whereat some knelt. Seemingly kneeling is not clean gone out of fashion. They kneeled, backs to the pulpit, in the good old way. I felt a little more at home when I saw that. But

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still I missed the "workers" with the roving, piercing eyes, which fell upon the conscious-smitten and made them blanch and cower. And I missed the band of saints and new-rejoicing, thronged about the altar, singing, praying, encouraging, pointing the way to those who still sought assurance of their sins forgiven. No two began to lead in prayer or raise the tune at the same time. Nobody did anything till he was called upon. Nobody interjected heartening "Amen" or "Hallelujahs." Nobody sobbed or groaned aloud in the extremity of his grief; nobody shouted or clapped his hands in his joy unspeakable and full of glory. It was very calm, very sedate, almost repressed. It was still even in the back seats by the door. They were empty. I wondered if I had missed my directions. The only sign outside the church door was an undertaker's sign. It seemed ominous.

What I missed most of all was the old-time hearty singing. Perhaps that was mere bawling, and a little off the key. No matter. It was alive. I missed the old-time, sturdy, manly tunes,

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that came out of a live man's heart, worthy of the noble words that voiced the loftiest aspiration of the human soul, seeking after God, if haply it might find Him. Instead there were the feeblest possible, soppy, sentimental little verses, set to the feeblest little sentimental tunes — I could make better out of putty — and invariably accompanied on the piano. On the piano! It needed only that!

“Ah! they don't have the good times in religion that they used to.” You remember those good times, don't you? In the old meeting-house back home, when we were little, where they had a reed-organ, if they had any; where they had a volunteer choir, if they had any, that rose to “Cast Up the Highway” on festival occasions, like the annual conference, where Brother John Snodgrass led the singing with his down, left, right, up, and his fa-so-la-mi-fa; or, maybe, it was Brother Jimmy Carhart, who despised organs, and, as often as he dared, broke out with: “Let's have some singin', now, without the music,” meaning for Minnie De Wees to sit still

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there on the organ stool and look as if she could bite nails; in the old meeting-house back home, where, when we were little, everybody turned around and kneeled flat on the bare floor, face to the back of the bench, to pray, and followed every word of the petition with moving lips, groaning aloud with the intensity of supplication, or cheering the one who "led" with loud-resounding cries of: "Yes, Lord!" "Lord grant!" "A-a-a-men!" "Hallelujah!" "Glory to God!" "Praise His Name!"; where nearly everybody stayed to class-meeting, which to Brother F. P. Morgan was the best thing in religion, and at which old Uncle Billy Nicholson used always to begin his testimony with: "Feller sinners an' dyin friends-ah. It's been forty years, down in Hanks's schoolhouse, sence God, for Christ's sake, spoke peace to m' soul," and always ended with: "Pray for me, brothers and sisters, that I may always prove faithful and finally meet you all in heaven, where we shall strike glad hands, where parting is no more."

There was some little talk then about a man

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named Darwin that had some crazy notion or other about monkeys turning into men, and a light-headed fellow named Tyndall, or some such name, that had the audacity to propose that an experiment be tried of all the world praying for the patients in one ward of a hospital and not praying for the patients in another ward, and see which set of sick folks got well first, but no serious attention was paid to his wanderings. The Higher Criticism had not been heard of then, and if at the annual conference some one preached a sermon mentioning Renan and Strauss, why, everybody knew how godless a Frenchman like Renan must be, and the only known Strauss was he that kept the One Price Clothing Store.

In those days the bending heavens came down. God walked with men. He was very near, almost like one of the neighbors. He was a kind and loving Father, but He was a father and spared not the rod. He was a jealous God, and when a mother idolized her child too much, He took it from her to show her where to set her affections. His arm was not shortened in those

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days, and many were the signal instances of answers to the prayer of faith.

In those days, the protracted meeting was no timid, half-way thing. Its immediate beginnings we were too little to know, you and I. It was not — and then suddenly it was. There was snow on the ground, we remember, but whether the protracted meeting began with the Week of Prayer, or whether the shortening days had something to do with it, who shall say? The shortening days were favorable, for then all the crops were in, and all the corn was husked, and to feed the stock and to dawdle over some few chores, to sleep and eat was all there was to do, week in, week out. The lengthening nights were favorable, wherein one read with difficulty, and all there was to read was "Dr. Chase's Receipt Book," and the "Works of Flavius Josephus," and the "Autobiography of Hester Ann Rogers," and Nelson's "Cause and Cure of Infidelity." The soul had time for introspection. Then the protracted meeting came along. Children could stay up till all hours, half past nine and even ten —

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yes, even later still, if they "went forward." There was meeting six nights of the week — Saturday the preacher had to have to himself so as to think up what to say on Sunday morning. Seven sermons a week he preached, besides "exhorting."

The first part of a protracted meeting was just like any other, singing and praying and reading out of the Bible and preaching. They had the organ for the hymns, and the prayers were not especially exciting, but the sermons were a little out of the common. Part of one still clings to my memory. There were four D's in it. One was Dreadful, one was Dismal, one was Doomed, and, I won't be sure, but I think the fourth D was Devilish. Nothing about birds and flowers and sunset glow. But thrilling as this was, we waited with eager anticipation for what was to come after, when the organ should be silent, and restraint laid off, as one lays off a garment. The sermon ended with fearful warnings to hardened impenitents; with joyful hopes to such as forsook their evil ways; with stirring appeals to every

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spark of one's better nature; with mention of the prayers of mothers clinging to the knees of God and beseeching Him to be mindful of their wayward sons. "Won't you come? Won't you come?"

And then broke out forthwith that hymn which seems to me instinct with all the heart's devotion:

"I am coming, Lord,
Coming now to thee;
Wash me, cleanse me in the blood,
That flowed on Calvary."

Or it might be that the hymn was older and went back to the heroic age of American history, to the days of coonskin hats and apple-cuttings and log huts and "fever and ager," to days when they really did have "good times in religion." It might have been a tune that Peter Cartwright sung, or Russell Bigelow, or Elijah Hedding, or any of the preachers that studied at "Brush College" and rode Circuit. Perhaps it was:

"Come, humble sinner, in whose breast,
A thousand thoughts revolve,

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Come with your guilt and fear oppressed,
And make this last resolve:—

“ I'll go to Jesus, though my sin
Like mountains round me close;
I know His courts; I'll enter in
Whatever may oppose.”

No tinkling, feeble, soppy sentimentality about that.

After this hymn, the true meeting begins. All that was before was the mere preface, endured for the sake of what is now to come. Look with all your eyes; listen with all your ears. As the hymn rises, the workers disperse themselves throughout the congregation and toward the back of the house. The rearmost bench of all is the seat of the scornful, the boys with long white crooked hairs sparse upon their chins, with Adam's apples that bob up and down on their throats; boys with quacking voices; boys that can chew tobacco without breaking out all over in a cold sweat; boys that have graduated beyond “ Gosh! ” and “ Jeemses Rivers! ” and are now clumsily trying other expletives, not without a vague fear of being

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struck by lightning. They're all smart boys. Nobody could possibly know as much as they do. You couldn't fool them, betch life. You couldn't get around them none, and tole 'em up to no mourners' bench. They know too much. And just to show the real manly spirit and spunk they have, all the time the preacher is telling about this place of the four D's, they are scuffling with each other in their hobbledehoy way, pinching, tickling, and cackling with laughter. Afraid? No, sirree, Bob! Neither is the man afraid that whistles going through the graveyard after dark. But just the same they sit close together, for there is something, they don't know what, that draws them to these meetings, something that fascinates, something they are afeared of because it is not of earth. If they were separated one from the other, they know that it would get them. Wait but a little and you shall see it. What? Can it be seen? Can one see the wind that shakes the wheat field?

"Sing some more!" commands Sister Beckenbaugh, from the pew-end of the seat of the scorn-

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ful, where she is arguing with that wild and reckless boy of hers. He looks down sheepishly, steals a glance at the others, a grin ready on his face, should he find one on theirs. They are quite grave, for in our day it didn't do to be disrespectful to other boys' mas. He listens to her. He doesn't "sass," or call her an old fool here, as he does at home. He just holds out stubbornly, sure of applause when she has given up and gone away.

"Sing some more!" (Sister Beckenbaugh is of those who hold that music is meant only to be a background for conversation.)

She argues, she pleads, she threatens with the four D's. All over the meeting-house this is going on. You stretch your neck this way and that to see what's happening, and all of a sudden you jump as if you were shot to find somebody's hand upon your shoulder.

"Brother, are you a Christian?"

"Well, no, sir, not exactly."

"Don't you think you'd ought to be?"

You snicker foolishly: "Th-n-nnnn!" and

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look down. The sweat comes on the back of your neck.

"You mean to be one some day, don't you?"

"Well, yes. Some day. Not now."

"Why not now?"

He looks you in the eye. "Why not now?" Something within you, not yourself, that makes for righteousness, echoes the question: "Why not now?" Are the things whereof your conscience doth accuse you — are your darling sins so great a comfort to you that you must cling to them a little longer? The man looks at you with earnest eyes. You cannot stand his steady gaze. You hang your head and fiddle with the pew-back.

"Why not now? What do you gain by waiting?"

"Well, I won't go now. Not to-night," and you smile a feeble, foolish smile. Inside of you something is saying: "Yes. Go on. Go on. Now's the time." But you hold back. What holds you back? I wonder.

"To-morrow may be too late. There may be no to-morrow. God may require your soul of

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you this very night. How will it be with you if you reject Him?"

Ah! He has missed his opportunity. If he had just kept on with "Why not now?" you would have yielded, but that you should die now, or at any other time, is too absurd. "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee."

"Think about this, my brother," he says, and lays his hand again upon you. His eyes leave you and wander to another, though he still talks to you. (Will he never have done?) At last he goes, and you draw a long breath, and look around with a faint smile for some one's approval of your manly course. If there is a Something not of earth that draws one to a better life, what is this other Something, also not of earth, that holds one back? Who of us but really wants to be a better man or woman? What is it, then, that makes us mulishly balk against the gracious leading? It is a mystery to us now; it was no mystery to us then. We knew right well it was the Old Boy in us, as big as an alligator.

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The singing is ended. From the altar comes the command: "Brother Snyder, lead us in prayer."

Brother Snyder is gifted that way. He begins slowly and with impressive dignity: "High! Holy! Almighty! Everlasting God! we come before Thee this evening," etc. Then, as the formal address and introduction conclude, he becomes more eloquent, more impassioned. His voice falls into the old-time swing, almost a chant, and the vocal recoil after each period or phrase becomes more audible: "They's sinners here to-night-ah," he cantillates, "that's a-haltin' betwix' two opinions-ah. They's sinners here to-night-ah that's a-swingin' to and fro-ah, like a do-o-o-o-or on its hinges-ah. WAKE 'EM UP-ah! WAKE 'EM UP, O L-o-o-rd-ah! "

"Amen, a-a-a-amen!" cries the enthusiastic and tumultuous chorus.

"Let 'em feel, O Lord-ah, the awful peril they are in-ah, like men a-walkin' in a fog-ah on the brink of a terrible clift-ah. WAKE UP these sinners-ah and show 'em, O Lord-ah, where they

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are at-ah! Hang 'em over HELL FIRE-ah, for a spell-ah. Give 'em a good strong whiff o' brimstone-ah! Let 'em have no peace from this time forth untill they find it in Thee-ah. Let not the prayers of godly fathers, the tears and groans of praying mothers-ah, go unanswered any longer. Strike — deep — conviction into their hearts, O Lord-ah! ”

With every petition rises a louder and more tumultuous chorus of cheering and encouraging approbation until the prayer is ended. While they still kneel, some one starts up a hymn. It may be that touching one of John Wesley's:

“ Take my poor heart and let it be
Forever closed to all but thee,
Seal thou my breast and let me wear
That pledge of love forever there.”

Again they pray, and then they rise and sing. The emotions, the sympathies are stirred to their profoundest depths by this thrilling oratory, by the regular, recurring accent of the hymn, by something else more mysterious, more profound, something that thrills by anticipation. Only a few are

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the ones they used to have when they had
times in religion. Brother Miller starts up

“ Sing on, pray on, we’re a-gainin’ ground,
Glory, hallelujah!
The power of the Lord is a-comin’ down,
Glory, hallelujah! ”

“ That’s it! that’s it! Sing it again.
there one more? We are going to pray p
soon now again. We are going to pray for
penitent souls, that they may know that their
which were many, are all forgiven. Who
will come? Ah, here is one for whom many
been praying. Right here, kneel right c
here.” Ah, this is good times in religion!

“ Glory to the Lamb!
Glory to the Lamb!
Glory to the Lamb!
The world is overcome,
Glory to the Lamb! ”

And when you hear that tune, know that,
and there, there are good times in religion,
that the mysterious influence is abroad. No

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ever made that tune. Nobody composed that on any parlor organ. It came. Weird, mysterious, almost formless, unlike any other earthly tune, something of that which lies Behind the Veil is in it. The ecstasy of the Beatific Vision pervades it.

“ And I shall overcome,
Glory to the Lamb!
Glory to the Lamb! ”

How many saintly souls, now gone to glory, have hymned that aspiration! How many redeemed and blood-washed! It is “ some sweet fragment of the songs above.” It is some broken echo of the melody chanted by the white-robed multitude around the crystal sea, the multitude which no man can number, harping ceaselessly on golden harps.

Tumult now follows; one leading in prayer, as if to take the kingdom of heaven by storm, two or three at once following him in just as fervent supplication, while the faithful pray almost as loudly to themselves, or groan in earnestness, or shout enthusiastic approval of petitions,

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amid the confused murmur of the workers about them, teaching the mourners to pray, pointing them to that Cross whereon He suffered once for all, and for all men. Let us a little withdraw ourselves and ask: What mean ye by this service?

For the first time in all his life this young man, now agonizing at the mourners' bench, feels to the full how he has slighted God, how often he has rejected tendered mercy. Perhaps it is too late now. There is a sin for which there is no pardon, let him cry never so loudly and weep never so bitterly. What this sin may be is mercifully hidden from us, but it is surmised it is resisting the influences of the Spirit. He has done that how often! Is that Dark, that Dismal, that Doomed, and Devilish Pit to be his habitation for all eternity, while overhead the company of the blessed chant everlastingly, all forgetful of his misery? Is he never to see again the sweet face of that praying mother of his, whose last whispered word to him was: "Meet me . . ." and who then, when she could not finish out the sen-

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tence, looked upward to tell him where? Lost!
Lost! Forever lost!

Some one kneels beside him and whispers to him the comfortable words: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever — *whosoever* believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Whosoever . . . Whosoever? Why . . . Why — . . . Why, that's me! Can it be that there is pardon for such a guilty wretch as I am? Hark! They are singing:

"Depth of mercy! Can there be
Mercy still reserved for me?
Can my God His wrath forbear —
Me, the chief of sinners, spare?
God is love, I know, I feel,
Jesus weeps, and loves me still,
Jesus weeps, He weeps, and loves me still."

And all of a sudden there comes that joy that cannot be told of in words. Sorrow and heaviness flee away. The burden falls off. That Dark, that Dismal Place no longer menaces. Saved! Saved from a never-ending Hell! Oh,

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glory to the kind, forgiving God! Glory! You saw this young man a little while ago, trembling, hesitating, torn by conflicting fears. You saw him agonizing on his knees. Look at him now. He starts up, his hands clenched, his eyes closed, a rapt expression on his face that shines as if by inward light. "Glory!" he shouts, "*Glory!*" louder still, my brother, "GLORY!" Every muscle quivers with tension. He cannot shout louder, but joy must be expressed in some way. He beats his palms together with the intensity of rapture. The others embrace him. Oh, the happiness of that moment! He bursts into the holy laugh. Others get their souls on fire. Others "come through" and join him in rejoicing in a new-found Saviour. Those who are already saved feel their hearts warm, and they, too, get to shouting and "striking glad hands," and, casting off the fear of what the world may say or think, "have good times in religion."

Sometimes they swooned away in ecstasy. I saw a girl lie thus for hours together, supine, her arms wide-spread. Her face was flushed and

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she breathed hard. A few stood about her, but they did nothing to revive her. It was all right. It occasioned no surprise, for in the earlier days there were such blessed trances in which favored ones had seen what lies Behind the Veil; had shuddered at the Dismal, Doomed, Dreadful, and Devilish Pit; had caught a glimpse of dazzling glories and heard "sweet fragments of the songs above" ere the pearly gates swung shut again, and they descended all unwillingly to the dull earth once more, but knowing thereafter what joys awaited there, what radiancy of glory, what bliss beyond compare. I was eager to know if to this young woman was vouchsafed any such boon, but I could get no word whatever. It seems to me now that they put me off. Boys were used to that in those days.

In such exuberance of enthusiasm, when, as it were, the soul runs wild and naked in its innocence, so many things occur to twitch the corners of the mouth, that the "holy laugh" would have had to be invented if it did not exist.

They tell the story of a man who went up for-

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ward night after night, night after night through all the meetings. The last night found him still seeking. No one could make much out of him, but at this last meeting some one put his arms about him and pityingly said: "What's the matter, my dear brother? Why is it you can't come through?"

The consciousness that the harvest was passed and the summer ended, the kindly sympathy — something, anyway — broke the man's heart. "Oh, I'm converted all right, all right, I guess," he sniffled, and then he broke into a regular, square-mouthed bawling spell. "Bub-but . . . ah-hoo-hoo-hoooooo! I jist caint make a prayer fit fer a daw-aw-awg!"

It is of record that among the Puritans of old New England were very wonderful and gracious conversions at six years, at four years, and even at two years and seven months. Nevertheless I seem to remember that there was some grumbling when Sister Moots and Sister Hoover made such a strenuous campaign among the little folks in Sunday-school. Sister Boggs, who taught the in-

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fant class, was quite outspoken against such doings.

"What do them little things know about sins forgive, and all such truck as that?" she angrily demanded. (Righteous anger, understand.) "Don't it say that their angels do always behold the face of the Father? Well, then. And what if they are naughty? Bless their bones, I wouldn't give two pins for a young one that didn't tear up Jack once in a while. No, I wouldn't. Why, lawsadaisy! What have they got to repent of? Trackin' in mud an' chasin' the chickens and such capers. Worst they ever did ud be all right if you'd turn 'em up and smack 'em, and kind o' loosen their hides so's they'd grow good. Well, s'posin'. S'posin' they *was* to die in their sins. What of it? They'd go to heaven, right *spang*! Oh, hush up! I don't want to hear any more talk about it."

But Sister Moots and Sister Hoover persevered, and I'll never be able to tell you just how a whole pewful of these young seekers looked one time when Brother Snyder got good and going about

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the "sinners here to-night-ah, a-haltin' betwix' two opinions-ah, and a-swingin' to an' fro-ah, like a do-o-o-o-or on its hinges-ah." They were weeping and wailing for their wicked sins, for they were in danger of hell-fire, every one of them having many times said to his brother: "Thou fool!" Each had a wet and wadded handkerchief and was scrubbing away industriously. They heard, without heeding, Brother Snyder's long-drawn cantillation, but when he came to: "WAKE 'EM UP-ah! Hang these sinners over HELL-FIRE a spell-ah! Give 'em a good strong WHIFF of brimstone-ah!" if you could have seen that row of round and red-rimmed eyes pop up from behind the pew-back with such a "What's-up-now?" expression, you would have felt the urgent need of the holy laugh yourself.

Just before the close of the meeting the mourners sit up, and they and others give in their "experience." The older ones know what to say from having been often at love-feast and prayer-meeting when "the meeting is now in your hands." But, it being their first essay as public

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speakers with the little folks, they sit and study, furtively watching their turn draw fearfully nearer and nearer. Still sobbing and holding their handkerchiefs before their eyes, they hunch their neighbor with: "Hay! How's this? 'I am trying to serve the Lord.' 'Ll that do, d'ye reckon?"

The first quarterly meeting after the revival, who can forget it? For the first time in his life the boy stays through the entire service. The solemn words are spoken. The strange and subtle fragrance of the sacramental wine distils upon the quiet air. The railful waits the words of dismissal, the short address concluding with these words: "Rise, brethren. Go in peace, and live for Him who died for you." As another railful presses forward is sung a verse of "There is a Fountain Filled with Blood" to that sweet tune built on the five-toned scale that touches the heart so with its repetition of the words:

"And there may I, though vile as he,
Lose all my guilty stains."

It is solemn, sacramental, ritualistic, definitely pre-

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scribed; it is the antipodes of the free, untrammelled expression of the emotions; it is the priestly contrasted with the prophetic.

But in the love-feast in the afternoon, after the prefatory little blocks of bread and sups of water, the prophetic once more resumes its sway. It is the sacrament of the lay people. They rise to tell of what the Lord has done for them: here the young soldier just admitted on probation, at the end of whose words, spoken with quivering chin, is sung: "I've 'listed in the holy war," and yonder the old veteran, soon to enter into his eternal possessions, for whom is sung:

"My days are gliding swiftly by,
And I, a pilgrim stranger,
Would not detain them as they fly,
Those hours of toil and danger.
For oh, we stand on Jordan's strand,
Our friends are passing over,
And just before the shining shore
We may almost discover."

Ah, they had good times in religion in those days, so it seemed to us. But in the Amen Corner

THE OLD-TIME REVIVAL

there were those who shook their heads and sighed, recalling what it was like in *their* day. When their folks moved here from Clark County, one time Pap was gone to the mill and wouldn't be back for three days, it was such a far ways in those days, and Mother was left alone with two little ones, and she could hear the wolves "hollering" in the woods over by where McKinnon's is now, and there was just a quilt hung up for a door to the cabin. When they had love-feast then a woman couldn't get into it if she had a flower or a ribbon in her bonnet, and men didn't find peace to their souls till they had ripped from their shirt-bosoms the ruffles they were so proud of. No one then dreamed of asking if one might not take a hand at cards, or read a novel, go to a dance or to the playhouse, and still be a "professor." Then they generally fasted once a week and always fasted the Friday before quarterly meeting. They had good times in religion then, but even that was nothing to what they had heard Pap and Mother tell about in the days when Daniel Boone and Lewis Wetzel and Captain

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Crawford and Simon Kenton and sinister Simon Girty, the renegade, were not mere names of demigods, but neighbors and acquaintances. In that heroic age, what was in our degenerate days a midwinter luxury, was common fare.

At every preaching then "the slain of the Lord" fell in windrows to the ground, struck down by mighty power. Then men, under conviction, wandered in solitary places, moaning and crying, "Lost! Lost! Forever lost!" Then the shouts of the redeemed and blood-washed could be heard for miles as they went spinning round the camp-ground like a top. Mysterious and inexplicable "exercises" attended the preaching of the Word. Saplings had to be cut off at the right height to give those affected by the "jerks" something to hold on by while, from the waist upward, they flung themselves back and forth with such uncontrollable violence that the women's bonnets and combs flew every which way, and their long, loosened locks cracked like a carter's whip. Around these saplings the ground was all torn up as if it had been a hitching-post in fly-time.

THE OLD-TIME REVIVAL

Men taken with the "barking exercise" would run on all fours, yelping and howling, and crying that they had the devil "treed." The old men dreamed dreams and the young men saw visions; sons and daughters prophesied, and children seven and eight years old preached to sinners and converted many, exhorting until they collapsed from sheer fatigue. The end of the world was thought to be at hand, for these were the signs of the last days.

And in truth the end of the world they knew was at hand, and these were the last days of their age. The new age was struggling to be born, a new age grander far than any that had ever been before — than all that had ever been before. A new nation founded, not upon authority, but upon the Equal Rights of Man, had come into being on this side of the Atlantic. On the farther side what change was being wrought in their day we may know from the fact that the flag of this American nation is now the oldest one that floats.

A waft of air stirs just before the dawn of day. It was so then. Men drew in their breath and

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their bosoms swelled with lofty purpose to do something for their fellows, something to hang on the dawning of the day. A thousand instances show this, none more heart-touching than that of Johnny "Appleseed." It was not much that he could do to help along, but at least he could bring apple seeds from far across the mountains and sow them in the dark forests of Ohio. He could lend, leaf by leaf, his books to the hungry backwoodsmen. The heavens be his reward for that!

Never before did such a Macedonian cry go up as from these pioneers. They had battled appalling hardships to win them homes in the wilderness. There grew up fathers of families who had never heard a sermon or a prayer offered to God. To them came the circuit-riders, aged men, as we are wont to picture them, almost beardless youths, filled with a youth's like fervency of spirit. Within them the fire for souls raged like a fever. Thousands of times they rode each year, sleeping where night took them, sometimes in the lone woods, some-

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in vermin-ridden cabins, preaching four times each day, and oftener if they could. Their nominal stipend was \$64 a year and find themselves; their real income never touched that figure. It was for no earthly recompense they wrought, but for an amaranthine crown. What pay could tempt a fever-stricken man to lie for weeks upon three chairs in a crowded cabin? That was a common experience with them. Starved out sometimes, they "located" till they could get new clothing and a fresh horse, and then — Once more into the field! Most of them died young, many of them among strangers; and not for years afterward did their relatives hear how, when they were too weak even to sit up in bed, they yet gathered the people round them and told them of the Cross and Him that hung thereon. With them it was no mere pious aspiration, but their heart's desire and prayer to God:

"Happy if with my latest breath
I may but gasp his name;
Preach Him to all, and cry in death:
'Behold! Behold the Lamb!'"

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Never before was there such a spreading of the Gospel. The aureoled saints that converted Europe were but a feeble folk beside them, slow-motioned, temporizing. They were unlearned men, these circuit-riders. As one of them has said, they "murdered the king's English at every lick," but they had power given unto them to move the hearts of men, such power as we can only estimate by first reading the accounts of camp-meetings in the "airy days," and then going to a modern one, thinly attended and only by the very old, at that, and deadly with a dulness that no brass quartet, or hired singers of religious ballads, or frequent jingling of tawdry "gospel hymns" can lighten in the least degree. In the old days whole settlements were utterly deserted to attend camp-meeting, and if the rowdies came and brought their whisky-bottles and made disturbances, that also was good times in religion. A mighty power could smite them senseless to the ground, if not the preacher's fist on "the burr of the ear," as Peter Cartwright calls it, (Says he: "I did not permit myself to believe that any man

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could whip me till it was tried.”) But the mighty power could always be depended on, and if “the slain of the Lord” did not keel over by the hundred under his preaching, the circuit-rider examined his heart to find out why.

It needs must be that the age thus ushered in should be the grandest that the world has ever seen. These were the Voices of the Wilderness crying: “Prepare ye the way of the Lord.” And like their prototype, the man of Jordan, plain-spoken and uncouth as they, there came a time when they saw with sadness that they must decrease, and what they had forerun must increase. Peter Cartwright prayed: “Lord, save the Church from desiring to have pews, choirs, organs, or instrumental music and a congregational ministry, like the heathen churches round about!” And, even as he prayed, he must have seen that the prayer was foreordained never to be answered. Something of desperation was in his cry: “The educated ministry, the settled pastorate, has been tried time and again, and every time has proved to be a perfect failure.” It was

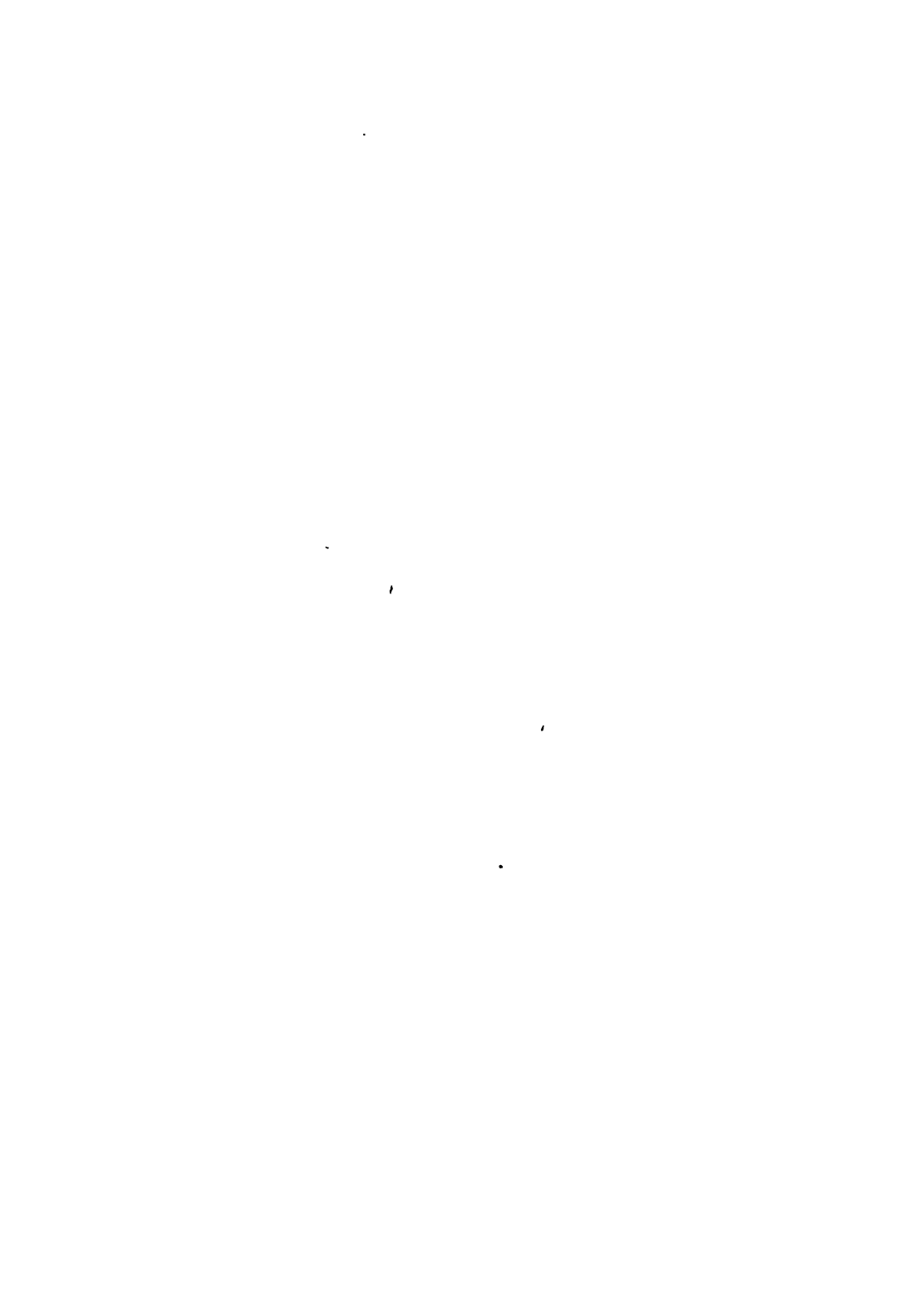
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the bitter anger of a man that clearly foresees defeat that made him scorn the theological seminaries as "preacher factories," and compare their finished products to so many "goslings that have got the straddles from wading in the dew."

And yet, if he could come back to earth, not as he left it, a weary, worn-out man, but as when, a mere stripling, he heard a voice from heaven calling, "Peter! Look up!" if he could return to us, nineteen years old again, with all the godlike fervency of youth, and all the good, hard common sense that was his, he would be none of those who shake their heads and "deplore the tendency of the age," as if God were an old man now, no longer knowing His own business! These have been twaddling their tinkling little "gospel hymns" so long that they have forgotten the sturdy lines that stayed and comforted so many in the days when they had good times in religion:

"We'll praise Him for all that is past,
And trust Him for all that's to come."

THE DRAMA IN OUR TOWN



THE DRAMA IN OUR TOWN

WHAT was the first real "the-ay-ter" play you ever went to?

I can hear you say "O-o-o-oh. . . ." in a long-drawn sigh. I can see you close your eyes, and a faint smile come over your face, as you recall that night. It is the first time you have thought of it in many a day. Wasn't it just gra-and?

I suppose that when they come to our age, the children of this day and generation will hardly be able to remember with as much distinctness their first real play. They see so many of them; so much is done for them that it wasn't thought well to do for us, and they live in a world at all points so widely different from that of ours "back home." And even so, that world was somewhat emancipated as compared with the one in which Grandpap lived when he was young. In those days Grandpap was a fine, strong, husky fellow

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(so other people have told me; he never said much about it himself), and took great delight in wrestling. But he got to thinking it over, and



Took delight in wrestling.

the upshot was that he stopped wrestling, right square off. He applied the moral touchstone of his day: If a thing is good fun, then it is wicked. I mind the first time Grandpap ate a

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dish of ice-cream. It tasted so good he knew it must be bad for the health. So he went and took a pill to counteract the evil.

In his young days all that people could do — nice people, I mean, not the rough element — was to attend to business, farming or shoemaking or housekeeping or whatever; and to try to be good men and women. What kind of a life is that? When folks don't do anything foolish, but just attend to business and try to be good — why, they might as well be dead. That's the way I look at it. The rough element might go to dances, might play euchre and seven-up; might read novels; might fiddle; might go to horse-races and the playhouse; might wear gold and silver and costly apparel, such as gold collar-buttons, and neckties, and artificial flowers, and ruffles, and ribbons and beads, and all such dew-dabs; but not nice people, not people that wanted to be somebody. And here's a funny thing: In spite of the fact that the girls wore no ruffles and beads and ribbons and artificial flowers, but went around in plain straight skirts and slat sunbonnets, they

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all got married. Some of them, two or times. Now, how do you account for that

This thing of being sensible and good went enough while everybody lived in log cabins



*They had to buy melodeons and
pianos.*

after the War was over, and the men that
been sleeping out of doors for four years
living a pretty strenuous life came home and
gan to put the same energy into business that
had put into fighting, things began to hum.
country went ahead like a scared rabbit. P

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made money so fast that they had to put some of it on their backs. They had to buy melodeons and pianos. Now, pretty nearly the first thing you learn when you take music lessons is the "Sack Waltz." As a natural consequence, whenever you'd find half a dozen girls together, one of them would have her skirts drawn up to her shoe-tops, so the others could see how she moved her feet, and she'd be counting, "*One*, two, three, *One*, two, three." It wasn't long before they got in a real organ, and a paid choir, and stained-glass windows, and a carpet on the floor. I shouldn't wonder if even the U. P's had organs now in the meeting-houses.

Well, you know what all that leads to. You might stave it off a little while, you might titivate yourself with lectures on "Does Death End All?" by the Rev. Joseph Cook, but you had to own up that you liked John B. Gough a lot better. He — er — er — (Out with it!) — Well, he kind o' acted it out more. Now, take the "Swiss Bell-ringers," for example. The music was lovely and elevating to the mind, and all like that, but the

ARLETON
WEST
NEW

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fellow that was, with them — what was his name, now? Sol. Smith Russell. That's the man — He was a heap more interesting. He acted it out. And then, about that time along came a lecturer on "Richard Brinsley Sheridan." Sheridan was a man that wrote plays, yes, I know, but don't



Now, take the Swiss Bell-ringers.

you see? It was English Literature the man was lecturing about, and it was merely incidental that he should tell about the characters, *Bob Acres*, and *Sir Lucius O'Trigger*, and the rest. He did it very well, and you could tell right away which was which character, but it kind of made you wish that . . . that . . .



The elocution teacher came to town.

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Just about that time, too, the elocution teacher came to our town. A lot of people learned from him how to talk like a dry cistern. I won't be sure, but I think he was the first to start the fashion of saying "i-ther" and "thurfore," two pronunciations which confer distinction upon any discourse, I think even more so than "disremember." (There was something so dressed up about "disremember." So much more refined than "fergit.") You remember the elocution teacher, and his plug hat, and his ginger-colored whiskers dyed a crape black up to within an eighth of an inch of the roots. You remember his explosives and effusives, his gutturals and pectorals, his orotunds and orals, his "Ho! Ha! Hee! Hoo!" his wavings and weavings of hands, "from the shoulder always; never from the elbows." You remember his:

"Rrrrrrr-ouse h-ye Ro-MUNS? H-rrrrrr-ouse ye sul-LAVES!" his:

"Hn-thy liver *loves*-ah, CUR-few SHALLLL LLLL not ha-rrrrringngng to NIGHTTTT-t!" and his:

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"Hea-ea-ear the sledgeswiththeirbellllllls, SEE-eelver bellllllls!"

Quite a few in our town took lessons from him. The worst of it was that a body could never get a chance to practise. The girl that took piano



*The fellow that played the "tooby"
could go down to the barn.*

lessons might clatter and boom up and down the scale in contrary motion from breakfast till bedtime, and nobody noticed it; the fellow that played the "tooby" in the band could take the lantern and go down to the barn and snort by the hour "Poomp! Poomp! Poom-poom-poom-poom!" and nobody made fun of him. But let

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an elocution student start in with "Ho! Ha! Hee! Hoo!" and Pap would fling down his *Examiner* with "Aw, let up on that!" and if you persevered, he would bawl out, "Give that calf more room!" There'd be a crowd out on the



*Has to keep one ear
hung out for the rat-
tle of a wagon.*

front sidewalk in no time, mocking you, and making that sound with their soft palates, a kind of snoring laugh which is so chilling to the artistic temperament. If he goes out to the woods pasture to practice, he has to keep one ear hung out, even in his intensest moments, for the rattle of a

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wagon jingling down the big road, carrying a worthy but wholly inartistic couple or this will ensue:

“Whoa! Ho, there! Stand still, can’t ye? . . . Mother, did you hear that? They’re killin’ somebuddy in yan!”

“Why, Pap!”

“Yes, sir, they are. Why, jis listen to him holler. My Lord! Oh, I can’t stand this.”

“Now, Pap —”

“Don’t hang onto me thataway. Leggo.”

“Now, Pap, now don’t ye go fer to git mixed up in no muss ’at don’t concern you, runnin’ head-long into danger like that. Now, Pap! An’ a mortgage on the farm, smf! an’ me left all, all alone in the world with four little helpless, innocent children, ahoo! an’ the milk o’ five cows to ’tend to — Aw, now, Pap!”

“Mother, it ain’t human for me to drive apast and leave that pore bein’ to his fate. Now. It won’t do, I tell you, to wait till we git to the Squire’s. It’ll be too late then. Whoa, Fan! Whoa, girl! You set right still and keep a-holt

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o' them lines. I'll be right back. LET THE MAN ALONE!"

He crashes through the hazel-brush with the noise of a yoke of oxen, while his poor wife sits perched up there, sniffing and "all of a trimble,"



*He crashes through the
hazel-brush.*

till he comes back, mad as a hornet and red in the face.

"Aw, just some fool in there speakin' a piece! Go on, Fan! Ck! Ck! Half a cent I'd 'a' broke his neck for him. D-tarn . . . fool!"

But while "Kentucky Belle" and "Lasca" and

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"The Polish Boy" were exciting and all that, something was lacking. There wasn't any dressing up; there wasn't any painting your face; there wasn't any curtain to go up and come down (which is perhaps the most important of all, since a curtain means mystery, and charm, and magic). But there was missing, too, the reckless deviltry, the risk of something which I will not further hint at than to say that these blue-tipped matches put you in mind of it, the state of mind associated with euchre in the haymow, and novels.

Ah, the first novel! I don't mean "Antelope Abe," but the first *bound* novel. In vain you argued with your mother that George Eliot's Works were entirely fit and proper reading for the young. She took the book and turned over to the title page and pointed her accusing finger at the black and shameless words, "Adam Bede, a Novel." She had you there. You might protest. "Oh, well, it ain't a *dime* novel." It was "A Novel" just the same, and there her finger stayed. Something sank within you. You might talk and talk, but you could not evade the fact.

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You could not but stare where the finger pointed. You, *you* were reading *novels*. False, false to the vows you had made! Knowing the good and choosing the evil. This was not your first step downward. Before this, you had borrowed from



*You heard what Brother Longenecker
said about that.*

a neighbor Shakspeare's Plays. You heard what Brother Longenecker said about that only last Sunday. He said, "Shakspeare is the Devil's Bible!" And you had borrowed that book, *borrowed* it, when you had Butler's "Analogy of Revealed Religion," Nelson's "Cause and Cure of Infidelity," "The Autobiography of Hester

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Ann Rogers," and other good books about the house, scarcely opened. Scarcely opened. What did you suppose was going to become of you if you kept on like that? The next thing, you'd be wanting to go to the the-ay-ter. And something within you thrilled in answer, although you knew then and know now that the word, especially when pronounced with the accent on the second syllable, connotes, as no other word in our language does, hardened impenitence that can look reproach in the eye and say, "Well, what of it?"

That is why we have so few theaters in this country and so many Opera-Houses. So much of conscience is left to us yet, that though we may do the deed, we dare not speak the word. Hence such conversations as:

"Goin' to the Opry-House to-night?"

"Why, I hadn't thought. What is it?"

"Uncle Tom's Cabin."

Perhaps it was not all your fault that the Old Boy leaped up in you at the bare mention of the the-ay-ter. The dialogues at the Sunday-school

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exhibitions might have fostered in you the wish to see and hear character impersonated. The minstrel show your daddy took you to, not long after your curls were cut off, first showed you the luxury



*"Goin' to the Opry-House to-
night?"*

of the sight of others' miseries (when they are feigned). It was in the old Melodeon Hall. That was before Judge Rodehaver built the Opry-House. All the comedy went by you, and you wondered and wondered what the folks were

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laughing at. But the afterpiece you understood. It showed how it would be away, 'way off in the future, in 1909, when the colored folks, so lately freed, would have the upper hand and would then give the white folks a taste of their own medicine. A lot of nig— Sh! How many times have I got to speak to you about that word? It's very low, and rude. Only Democrats say that— A lot of colored gentlemen were having a fine dinner, when in comes a poor white man all wrapped up in a quilt, his cold pink legs showing underneath. He begged them for something to eat. He couldn't have it.

“What did you eat last?”

“I had a peanut last week.”

Aw, the poor man! You felt so sorry for him. And just when you were wishing they would tell him to draw up and eat himself done, Bang! went a cannon or a pistol or something, and the curtain came down, shutting off the colored gentlemen, and the man threw off his quilt, and there he was all in pink tights and spangles, and dancing to the music. And coming home, your father ex-

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plained to you that the man was only pretending. He wasn't really hungry.

And then the pammer-ammer of "The Pilgrim's Progress" gave you an inkling of scenic effect. "Pilgrim's Progress" is (or was) a boys' book all full of fighting and adventures. It only had a few black and white pictures in it. The pammer-ammer was a whole, whole lot of colored pictures, big ones that they rolled past whenever the man clapped his hands. And maybe *Apollyon* wasn't a fierce-looking critter, all green and scaly, and an arrow-headed stinger on the end of his tail! But it was the effects that interested you. For instance, when *Christian* first started out, it came up to storm, and they turned down the gas, and the piano went whanga, whanga, whanga on the bass notes, just exactly like thunder. And then *Christian* meets *Evangelist* and asks the way, and *Evangelist* says, "Do you see yonder shining light?" and *Christian* says, "I think I do." Well, I should think so too, for there was a hole cut in the canvas, and just then somebody put a

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light behind it, so that you couldn't help but see it. There were a lot of those things, but the best of all was the Grand Transformation Scene at the last. *Christian* and *Hopeful* swum the River of Death. It seemed as if they swum standing up and kind of cow-fashion, but we didn't mind that, we were so interested in seeing how the story came out. And sure enough, they got to Heaven. In the next scene there they were, being pulled up by a wire, and two angels, also on wires, came in from the sides, blowing on horns. And there was the Celestial City, all gold and white, splendid, if a little skimpy.

And here's something they had in our town that I don't think they had in yours. Just as *Christian* and *Hopeful* started to wobble upward, a painted scene-cloth all blazing at the edges swung across the opening. The lecturer gave a kind of jump, but kept right on talking, and pretty soon he bowed and smiled, and the curtain came down, and the piano started up a grand march, and the people put on their things and sauntered out talking about how lovely it all was, and how much

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better they understood it now than they ever had before. Apparently it never crossed their minds — it certainly did not cross mine — that possibly the blazing scene-cloth might not have been down on the program as a scenic effect; that while the lecturer was bowing and smiling he was scared half to death, and if the piano had played a shade less loudly, I might have heard them behind scampering here and there for buckets of water, and stamping out the blazing canvas. So far as I know, never a word got out that would make people understand how near they came to being burned alive or trampled to death that night.

And speaking of fire makes me think of red fire and the entertainment they got up for Center Street M. E. when they were going to build the new church. It ran for three nights. They called it "Tableaux Vivants." When I say "they," I mean the bills, for the people just skipped those words. That is, all of them did except those folks who always make fun of everything stylish. They said, "Tab-lokes Vi-vance! What in tunket is tab-lokes vi-vance?" In case

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you don't know what these words mean, I'll explain that it's where you get folks to dress up and stand just so and not move, and then you pull the curtain up, and when they can't stand it any longer without breathing, you let the curtain down, and you burn red fire so's the light will shine on them. The reason why you mustn't breathe is, that if you do, the smoke of the red fire will make you cough. I don't know whether, when you saw these . . . er . . . these what-you-may-callums, they had what they had the night I went. The program said: "Poses Statuesques — Ajax Defying the Lightnings — Cain Killing Abel — The Dying Gladiator." Well, sir, when the curtain went up, there stood a man without anything on but a suit of union underwear, no pants or shirt or anything but just this white suit of underclothes, looked like it was all in one piece, and his face was all white, and he had kind of cotton-batting hair, and he looked for all the world like a marble statue, like that one on the Clayton Monument down at the cemetery, only that is a marble angel with a nightgown on, and kind of holes cut in the

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back to let the wings go through, though how they get the feathers through without rumpling them all up, I never could see. This man I'm telling you about was a fine-looking young man and very well-built but — Well, what's your opinion? Do you



To set a good example to the young?

think such a thing is calculated to set a good example to the young? There was a good deal of talk about it at the time, I remember, especially among the old stick-in-the-muds up in the Amen corner, and I heard that old Aunt Betty Mooney went so far as to threaten to take out her letter. She said such goings-on were perfectly scandalous,

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and if that was the way they were going to do, she just wouldn't stand it. Now!

But there could be no possible complaint as to the last thing on the program. When the curtain went up, there were potted palms on the stage, and a rubber plant tied with a red ribbon. That was to show it was in the tropics somewhere. Then a lot of the Company K fellows marched in with their guns, only they wore red-and-yellow uniforms and carried a flag that made you think of a horse-blanket. It was yellow and had two narrow red stripes, one at each end, like a horse-blanket. And there was a man led out with his hands tied behind him and a handkerchief over his eyes. Then we knew what it was. It was down in Cuba that time they were going to shoot a revolutionist. The captain said: "Read-ay-ay! Aim!" and just as he was going to say: "Fire," and the women started to put their fingers in their ears, here came Abel Horn — Oh, sure, he was in it. He was in everything — here came Abel Horn and threw the American flag over the man as much as to say: "You just dare!"

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And while the captain was studying whether he'd better or not, down dropped what they call a "tar-po-le-on" that they had hung up at the back of the stage, and there stood Jenny Snodgrass with her hair let down, and a kind of a skating-cap on her head, and a big shield that came up so she could rest her hand on it, and all dressed up in the American Flag, low-neck-and-short-sleeves and a trail, or would have been a trail if she hadn't been standing on a white box, kind of. Well, sir, that just settled it. They dassent to shoot the man then, and they lighted the red fire, and the piano started to play, "O, say, can you see," and the people clapped and stomped like everything. But I tell you it was a mighty near thing for that fellow with his hands tied. Little more, and he'd have been a goner. It was bully.

Coming home with George Donnyhew that night, I said as much. Now, George was a boy that had been around a good deal. He had been down to Columbus twice, and I think he had been as far as Circleville. "Aw, that ain't nothin'," says he. "You ought to see a real the-ay-ter

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play once." At that moment Satan entered into me. I fought against the entrance. I knew how wicked it was to think of such things, let alone going to them. But I also knew (rejoicing and despairing in spirit at once), that a day would



*"Aw, that ain't nothin',"
says he.*

come when I should be among those who sat and saw the Devil's Bible acted out on a stage by people painted up and dressed up to look the way they did in those days. I knew, too, that very likely I should sink so low as to attend a "variety show," and that, as you know, scrapes on the bottom, for the ladies wear short skirts and kick up

THE DRAMA IN OUR TOWN

their heels, as bold as brass. It all came true, I regret to say. But I shall also have to tell you that even in a "variety show" I never saw any "Poses Statuesques," in union underwear.

In another place I have written about William B. Bradbury and the great work he did for this country's musical development by his composition of sacred songs, whose bass was invariably do, sol, and fa, so that any young man who learned those three tones of the scale could join in without having to sing "air." Bradbury did something which contributed more to the dissipation of the old foggy notion that we are here to attend to business and try to be good, than any other one thing. He composed "*Esther, The Beautiful Queen*." It was all about *Esther*, and *Mordecai*, and the Israelites, and that rascalion of a *Haman*. Being from the Bible, it took the people off their guard, don't you see? Musically, the work compares favorably with "Work for the Night is Coming," and "Shall We Gather at the River?" and that is a great convenience in the matter of amateur productions. And you can

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make the costumes out of cheesecloth, blue and red and yellow, and all such; and it's great fun getting it up, and taking the girls home after the rehearsals, and there are more solos for more different people than you can shake a stick at; and there are no end of chances to work in all the nice-looking little boys and girls in town as pages and train-bearers, and so all the fathers and mothers, and brothers and sisters, and husbands and wives, and uncles and aunts and cousins, to the fifth remove, and relations of every degree, and friends and acquaintances of everybody that "takes part" all buy tickets, and the Opry-House is chock-a-block for the three nights. It could run longer, but everybody in it is just played out with excitement and can't stand any more. There is acting in it, and scenery, and costumes, and you paint your face, and the curtain goes up, and all like that, but it isn't a the-ay-ter. Not at all.

It's all singing. So it can't be a the-ay-ter.

Well, if it's acting and costumes, and the curtain goes up and down, and it's all singing, it must be an opera.

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No. It's about the Bible, so it can't be an opera.

Well, what is it, then?

It's a cantata. Something entirely different from an opera or a play.

Right here I must confess my entire unfitness to write on this subject. I suppose I am the only man in the United States of America, able to sing the scale in C, who not only has never taken part in "Esther, The Beautiful Queen," but who has never even witnessed a performance of that great work. I never had the chance. I suppose I ought to feel proud of the distinction, but I'm not. It makes me feel lonesome. You saw it, and I didn't. You were in it, and I wasn't. I'll bet that at times you find yourself whistling that about: "Ever the dutiful more than the beautiful," and, "I'll go unto the King, though not according to the Law." Oh, well, that's the way of it in this world. Some have everything nice, and some don't have anything but trouble.

But I saw "The Drummer-boy of Shiloh," just the same as you did. Laura Hornbaker, who had

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been *Esther*, was the girl that Mose Coogler wanted to get, and that Johnny Durfee got. Mose was afterward Prosecuting Attorney, you remember. He played the part of the *Rebel Colonel*, and was in command of Andersonville, and who should turn up among the Union prisoners but Johnny Durfee that got engaged to Laura before the War broke out. She mittened Mose because he talked so against the Old Flag. Harry Detwiler that played the *Dutch Recruit* wasn't in the prison scene at all because he was such an awful cut-up you couldn't help laughing at him, and this scene wasn't intended to be a bit funny. The Company K boys were all in rags, and chalked up to look pale and starved to death. In walks Mose Coogler with a bucket, and they all clamor for something to eat, and he scatters wet sawdust like it was chicken feed. They made out it was cornmeal. And the boys grabbed for it with their hands like they were crazy to get it, and pretended to eat it. (Oh, it made you wild to see 'em.) Johnny Durfee was supposed to be too sick to be able to get his share (he had such pretty black eyes and mus-

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tachel). So *Little Jimmy*, the *Drummer-boy of Shiloh*, who was supposed to be the brother of Johnny Durfee (young Loosh Benson played the part), he up and asks Mose for something for his poor sick brother. That was Mose's chance to get even with Johnny for cutting him out with Laura. So he roars out: "No, you Yankee dogs! No-o! Right here in this prison pen you shall rot, starve, and die!" (Oo-oo! You ought to have heard the people grit their teeth at that.) So Loosh he throws himself at Mose's feet and begs and pleads with him. But Mose was a coward as well as a villain, and he shot the poor boy dead. That is, he did on the nights when the blame thing would go off. Sometimes it wouldn't, and young Loosh would have to stagger and fall and struggle and die just the same as if he had been shot. Heart failure, you know. Abel Horn was in that, too, and after Johnny Durfee said: "My G —! *Little Jimmy* dead? This will kill poor mother!" Abel had a speech like this: "Comrades, unknown to you all I have kept concealed next to my heart —" But wait

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till I tell you. One night he forgot to put the folded-up flag inside his shirt-bosom, so when he came to feel for it there, he didn't find it.—“Next to my heart,” says he, hunting wildly, and reaching way down.—“Next to my heart”—(then he whispered: “Where is it? Quick, you fellows!”)—“Next to my heart—next to my—my heart”—Abel was getting rattled. Finally he fished it out of his pistol pocket where he had thoughtlessly stowed it.—“Next to my heart the dear Old Flag. Let us spread it over *Little Jimmy* for *Little Jimmy* is dead.”

Now you might say *that* was a the-ay-ter. It was a regular play, costumes and everything, and all spoken except in the last act where Laura sings “There will be one Vacant Chair,” with that kind of a tremble in her voice that she got right after she began to take vocal of old Prof. Minetti who plays the organ in St. Bridget's Church. Yes, but don't you see, these were our boys, the Company K boys, and we wanted to help 'em along. It wasn't like upholding regular actors, trapesing around the country, too lazy to make a living in an

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honest way. And besides, it was about the War, and that's the next thing to a Bible story. People went to see it and laughed till they got to coughing at Harry Detwiler trying to make his blanket cover both his head and toes at once when his stuffed stomach made the blanket too short,—people that would no more have gone to a regular the-ay-ter than they would have walked into Oesterle's and ordered a glass of that mixture of yeast and quinine that Oesterle called beer.

All this time, whenever they threw show-bills over into your front yard, you studied them till you almost knew them by heart. They were these long narrow bills that they don't have any more. Now and again there would be a picture on one of them of people with their hands clasped in agony while they saw somebody running a butcher-knife into somebody else. How you did wish you knew the story of it, and how it all came out! But it was wicked to go, and it cost money. But one day the man that papered your house, who was also a bill-poster, left a complimentary ticket for you. He said he didn't care much for that

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kind of a show, but he thought maybe you would. Would you? Aw-haw-haw-aw-aw! *Would* you? Would a duck swim? *Could* you? That was the question. Well — er — er — seeing that it said “ Complimentary ” on it, why, it would be



*One day the man that papered your
house left a ticket for you.*

kind of ill-mannered not to go. Oh, goody! Goo — But — er — er — How about your getting home? Because it would be pretty late at night. Oh, you'd come right home as soon as it was out. Yes, mam. You wouldn't loiter? No'm. Well — er — er — Wouldn't you be afraid to be

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alone on the street so late at night? Ah, afraid! You afraid! What of, for pity's sakes? Well, you know you always said the covered bridge was so spooky after dark. Oh, well! That was a good while ago. That was along last spring when you were littler. And besides, there would be



You were in the front row.

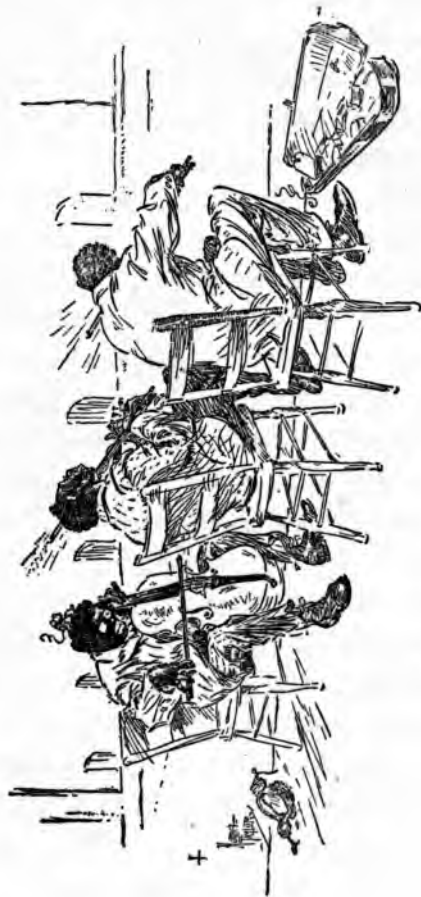
people coming home from the the-ay — from the entertainment, and you could come along with them. What time did it begin? "Doors open at 7:30. Performance begins promptly at 8."

The doors did open at 7:30, didn't they? You were there and saw 'em open. In those days there weren't any reserved seats, no boxes, or orchestra

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seats, or "parkay," or balcony, or even gallery. There was just the flat floor of the Opry-House, and rows of wooden chairs nailed to scantlings. First come, first served, and you were in the front row, so close that you could just see over the edge of what the janitor called "de flat-fawm." You stared at the drop curtain with its view of Swiss scenery tastefully bordered with painted advices like: "Go to J. P. Runkle's for your Hardw're, Stoves and Tinw're"; "Highest Prices for Country Produce at Rouse & Walker's Grocery Store, Main St. opp. P. O."

Dinny Lynch's orchestra must have been playing for a dance that night somewhere, so the "troupe" engaged the nig — the colored band from the South End, and whenever they got to going, the windows of the hall would bulge outward, and little flakes of whitewash floated down on you from the ceiling. That helped to pass the time a little, though if anybody asks you if you have any notion of how long a thousand years is, you can tell 'em, Yes, you have. It's just about as long as from 7:30 till 8, the first time



The colored band from the South End.

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you ever saw a real 'the-ay-ter play. But you enjoyed yourself in anticipation — until you heard something that made your heart sink within you. Right back of you sat two farmers, come into town to "set" on the Grand Jury. One of them



"To be continued in our next."

said to the other: "Tell you what, I jist bet you anything 'at when it gets along to the excitin' part, they'll come out an' say, 'To be continued in our next,' like they do in them weekly paper stories." Gosh all fish-hooks! If they did that! And your "Complimentary" was for one night only.

Even a thousand years will pass if you wait

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long enough, and finally the curtain did go up, and there on a green sofa sat the *Lady of Lyons* with a bunch of hat-trimmings in her hand, saying: "I cannot think who it is sends me these beautiful flowers every day." Got you interested right from the word go. And she had such pretty rosy cheeks! And wasn't *Claude Melnotte* perfectly elegant? And that *Mossoo Bo-se-ong*, I just despised that man, didn't you? Think of him drawing a revolver on a lady! That's no way to act. And then, when he got left after all, and he says: "K-hairses on ye both!" that old fellow (I can't think of his name now), he jumps up and cracks his heels, and he says to him: "Curse away! But remember that curses are like chickens and always come home to roost." And that's just about so, too.

So far from the story being "continued in our next," it was completed that night, and more also, for they had another one, a short one, about a lady that took in roomers, and she rented out the same room to two men, one that worked nights, and the other days. They didn't know she did

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that, but they suspicioned something was wrong, and finally, one day, the man that worked days got laid off or something, and came home unexpected, and here was this other fellow in his room. Well, sir, if they didn't have it hot and heavy there for a while!

Don't you remember? Sure, you do. Well, maybe it wasn't "The Lady of Lyons." Maybe it was "East Lynne," or "The Marble Heart," or Maggie Mitchell in "Fanchon the Cricket," or even "Uncle Tom's Cabin." No matter. It was the most entrancing thing that ever was. George Donnyhew was right when he said of the tableaux vivants: "Aw, that ain't nothin'. You want to see a real the-ay-ter play."

Let me see, now — How long was it after that before you said to yourself, "I could do as well as that"? And when was it you began to subscribe for a theatrical paper and read with eager interest the news-notes from Ishpeming and Canal Winchester, like "Giddy Girls comb. 16 to fair house. Leap for Life co. 21 failed to show up and house dark. Next wk. Sharon's U. T. C. co.

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28-29"? How you pondered on "WANTED — AT ONCE. For Bigelow Bros'. Refined Wagon Show, leading juvenile. Must be neat dresser and double in brass, willing to eat and sleep on lot. We PAY, not promise. Mashers and boozers, first offense, Bing! Address Bigelow Bros., Jefferson Center, Shelby County, Ind." You came very near writing to them, didn't you? "Wait a while," says you to yourself. You have been waiting ever since. The birthdays have come and come, each one a little swifter-footed than its predecessor, each one exhaling a faint sigh, as it found you less likely to do what you had dreamed so vividly of doing — er — (Whisper) — going on the stage. You could do as good as some of them. You could do it better now than ever; could put more intelligence into it, more feeling, but — (Whisper again) — you're bigger around the waist.

Wouldn't you like to see again that first real the-ay-ter play of yours, if you could see it with the same eager interest, if once again you could sit there tranced, your lips moving as the actors



When was it you began to subscribe for a theatrical paper?

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THE CAMPAIGN BACK HOME

GENTLE READER: Up to now you and I have walked along, in our journeyings back home, with our arms interlocked upon each other's shoulders, thicker than thieves. Whenever I have given my experience, and told my "tribbles and trialations," as Brother John Warnock said in class meeting one time, you have grinned all over your face and wagged your head and agreed: "Yes, sir, that's so. Now, that's jist the way it was."

I don't know how it is with you, but I begin to feel kind of uneasy about that sort of thing. I'm so constituted that it's bad for my health to have folks agree with me all the time. It gets so monotonous. I don't see but what you and I will have to have a row. It's bound to come sometime and we might as well have it over and done with. And yet I shouldn't like it to be anything more than a boyish spat, like those we used

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to have coming home from school, when I'd black your eye and you'd send me in bawling to my ma, with my hand held like a cup under my nose, and the next morning when you passed my house you'd yodel for me the same as ever, and I'd snatch up my books and tear out of the house so as to walk with you.

Let me see now — what is there we can quarrel about?

I might pick a fuss by calling you names. I might chant at you,

“Moore! Moore!
Rick-rick-store!”

or,

“Fie, for shame! Fie, for shame!
Everybody knows your name!”

But I don't know that your name is Moore, or, indeed, what it is at all.

I might tease you with

“Black eye! Black eye!
Turn around and tell a lie.”

or,

“Blue-eyed beauty!
Run home and do your mammy's duty!”

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which is a terrible insult and implies that you help your mother with the dishes, an aspersion which you would have to "take up" or be forever disgraced. But I don't know the color of your eyes.

I might bristle up to you and say, "I kin lick you. You think you're smart." That isn't done, though, to pick a fuss, but to get acquainted, and we don't need an introduction, Gentle Reader. And, besides, it would be just like you to sniffle, "You lea' me be, now; you big stiff! Ma! Ma-ma!" and run home bawling.

Let me see, now — isn't there something we can squabble about, just like boys, and be just as unreasonable and loyal to our side? Let me see — let me see —

I have it — politics.

And since I proposed the game it's my first choice of sides. I choose Republican.

Hee! Hee! I've got the advantage of you from the very first. I've got something to holler at you, and you haven't anything to holler back at me.

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"Sixteen rats! Sixteen cats!
Sixteen dirty Democrats!"

I knew that would grind you. Your side hasn't any poetry like that. Not smart enough. The nearest you ever came to it was a long time ago when you could say "329" to us, and we'd get fighting mad in a second. So many of these young whiffets don't know what that means that we'll have to explain to them. It seems that one time Congress voted to raise its own salary, and dated the raise far enough back so that each congressman would have \$329 that he hadn't figured on. But it was such an unpopular move that a statesman, afterwards nominated for President, covered back his grab into the Treasury. The worst thing he could have done! The very worst thing he could have done! Because (if you're a politician) when you get caught with the goods on, the thing to do is to make out that you are working in the best interests of the country, and stick it out that it was your plain duty to do that very thing. And for this statesman to run like a whitehead at the very first holler, and go put

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the money back where he got it — oh, that was too mortifying! And your side was just malicious enough to see it and to take advantage of it. Bad little boys thought 329 was a new naughty word, and chalked it on the fences and on the sidewalks, to the horror and disgust of all. You saw it everywhere. Going home from church you'd see it, and if you were walking with a lady you'd have to say: "Oh, what a funny looking cloud that is!" to divert her attention. It was everywhere. People who lived at No. 329 Main Street had to petition the Common Council to change their house number to 327A. They couldn't stand it. In the early part of the campaign it looked as if our candidate was going to be defeated, but after this 329 movement got good and going, the moral sentiment of the country was awakened and our candidate was triumphantly vindicated by being elected. He's dead now, and he's got a far finer monument than the ramshackle factory chimney made out of brickbats they put up for Lincoln.

That was the only popular cry you ever got on

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us, and it taught you a lesson, seemingly. It taught you your place. And when we shout at you

“Sixteen rats! Sixteen cats!
Sixteen dirty Democrats!”

you take your medicine in silence, the same as Tom Lee did when we gathered outside his laundry and declared, “Chinyemen eat rats!” I always associated the two cries.

I suppose most people have an Uncle Jack, the same as I did. Uncle Jack’s Christian name was not John. It was . . . I kind of hate to tell you . . . His initials were A. J. . . . Well, I might as well out with it, I suppose. His name was Andrew Jackson, and they called him Jack for short. So — so you may guess what his politics were. There’s black sheep in every family and it’s no use trying to make out different. As you go through the world you learn to have more charity for others’ failings, and you try to think it isn’t always their fault, even though it does make you hang your head a little.

THE CAMPAIGN BACK HOME

It was to my Uncle Jack that I made my first political argument. I didn't realize what a sock-dolager it was until afterwards, when I heard my daddy telling it around and laughing about it and saying what a smart child I was for my age. If Uncle Jack hadn't been another Ephraim joined to idols, that argument should have set him to thinking.

I was just at that place in the First Reader where it says, "See the fat pig. Can the pig run? No, the pig is too fat to run," and when Uncle Jack, who had come to town all dressed up, with a ribbon pinned on his coat, bade me sit on his short, round knee while he felt around in his pockets to see if he couldn't find a stick of red striped candy somewhere on him, I thought of how Uncle Jack would look if he should try to run, for he was what you would call "a fleshy man" if you picked your words, and "a pussy man" if you didn't. He made inquiry as to the progress of my education, and let on to be much surprised that I knew my letters. To prove it, I called off the big capitals printed on the strip

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of muslin tacked on the bottom of the big flag hung across Main Street, from the window over Case's Drug and Book Store to the window above Mr. Morningred's New York One Price Clothing Store.

"And what does that spell?" I asked my Uncle Jack.

"That spells 'Democratic County Convention,'" answered my Uncle Jack, with a pride I thought unseemly.

"Yes, but what you got it on the Union flag for?" I demanded to know. "Why ain't you got it on the Copperheads' flag? Ain't the Democrats Copperheads?" Uncle Jack got red as fire, but he said: "We're all under the one flag, my boy. We all want to do what's best for our country, whether we're Democrats or Republicans." When they come at you with talk like that, what can you say? When they get the quiver in their voices, I mean. I knew as well as I knew anything that Uncle Jack had been a Copperhead; that he believed that when the people of a State vote of their own free will and accord to come

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into the Union, they have the same right to go out of it if they vote to do so of their own free will and accord; and you know that's not only nonsense — it's treason.

Wait a minute. Say! You and I once came to blows about politics. Yes, you do too remember it, if you'll just stop and think. It was when we were in Miss Munsell's room. There was a Democratic rally, and big Pat McManus was one of the marshals, with a sash on him and all. And he came riding past the school yard when we were out at recess, and we hooted at him that about rats and cats and Democrats; and just to show that we weren't all Black Republicans you hollered: "Hurrah for" (whoever it was that was running for President and Vice-President on the Democratic ticket — they didn't get elected, I know), and quick as a flash I added, "And a rope to hang 'em!" And quick as another flash you hauled off and hit me in the mouth, and I hit you on the head and knocked your cap off, and you hit me — no, that time it went right past my ear; never touched me — and I hit you in the face, and

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the other boys came a-running and shouted, "A fight! A fight!" And I was whirling my fists around each other like the real fighters do and studying where I'd paste you if I got a good chance, when Enos Barker came up and stopped it. I was kind of glad of it, for my lip was bleeding, and the blood was red just like it is when it comes out of an artery, but the other boys were plum disgusted at Eeny. He was an awful bossy boy, anyhow, and he was bigger than most of us, and he had just joined the church and was what they call "an influence for good." Why, look! If he caught you at it, he'd make you give back the marbles you had won, and he wouldn't even let you say "Gosh!" You'd have to say "Goodness!" Last I heard of Eeny, he was running one of these county history enterprises. Say; but he did everlastingly soak those farmers up in Clark County! "All the traffic will bear!" was Eeny's motto.

So he went and tattled on us to Miss Munsell, and she had us both up before her desk. She told us we mustn't fight over our "political prefer-

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ences.” (I remember that expression as plain as if it was only yesterday), and said she would let us off this time, but the very next time — she wanted the whole school to pay attention — the very next time she caught anybody, it didn’t make any difference who, quarreling over politics, why — she hoped a word to the wise would be sufficient. By golly! she was a terror when it came to whaling a boy. When she got done with him he was as ridgy as a wash-board.

She had to say that because, theoretically at least, Democrats do have some rights, but I could see she was with me, heart and soul. The others were, too, and all but said, “Goody! Goody!” when I told how I had capped your sentiment with “And a rope to hang ’em!” So I went back to my seat with a swelling heart. My lip was swelling some too.

That night there was a drunk man on the street. That’s the kind of folks Democrats are! That’s why the Democrats like to see it rain, for rain makes corn, and corn makes whisky and whisky makes Democrats.

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Hear also what Horace Greeley saith: "All Democrats are not horse-thieves; but all horse-thieves are Democrats." (That was before he ran for President on the Democratic ticket.) I feel sorry for you fellows. Honest, I do. And I felt sorry for my Uncle Jack and troubled in spirit about him, because he was a nice man, and a good-living man, and a sweet singer, and could tell such beautiful, scary Indian stories, when I went out there to visit his boys, that when it came bedtime Aunt Caroline would have to hold my hand all the way upstairs. It was a shame he was a Democrat — a blame shame, so it was. He was no drunk man, neither was he a horse-thief, and it got me why he should want to associate, even politically, with such a crowd.

They were a distinctly inferior class of people, and always had bad luck. They had to get up that cheerful saying about rain, because whenever they had a rally or anything it almost always rained. Their sky-rockets weren't near so pretty as ours and didn't go half so high.

And when they had the band it didn't blow as

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loud for them as for us, or play such nice tunes. And you could see the band felt ashamed to have to turn out for Democrats, and always made a point of giving them "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean," because in the first line of the second verse there is a distinct allusion to Democrats. You never thought of it? Why, it says as plain as anything:

"The wine-cup, the wine-cup bring hither," and if that isn't hinting pretty strong I don't know what is.

Their torchlight parades were regular fizzles. "About a hundred men and boys in line," the *Examiner* said about them always. But our parades were fine. Sometimes there would be about a million in line. Well, of course, not quite as many as that, but pretty nearly though — pretty nearly.

We'd be up on Richardson's steps on Main Street, where we could see 'way, 'way down to the South End. It would be all dark except for the coal-oil lamps in the windows of the stores and on the wooden posts at the street corners. Every

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Hymn of the Republic." But that's only a funny song nowadays about a man named John Brown, or some such name. The real patriotic air is "Marching Through Georgia." I once knew a man that was in the march to the sea. He brought home three gold watches from it. He always liked that tune a lot.

Well as I was saying, around the corner came the rows on rows of sparkling lights, with all the sinuous, wavy motion of one of these woolly "Fever-'n-ager" caterpillars, moving up and down as the men kept step, and moving to this side and that as the men dodged the mud-puddles. Farther back in the line, where part of the time the men heard the music of the cornet band, and part of the time the music of the fife-and-drum corps there was a sort of joint (as we could see from Richardson's high steps) where the line of lights joggled and wobbled. Uncle Mose Strayer always had charge of the fife-and-drum corps until he got the rheumatism so bad that Aunt Becky wouldn't let him march through the wet any more. I reckon that man knew more nice tunes on the fife

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than any other man before or since. He knew "The Irish Washerwoman," and "The Fisher's Hornpipe," and "Money Musk," and "Bonaparte Over the Rhine," and "St. Patrick Was a Gentleman," and "The British Grenadiers," and "The Frozen Leg," and — oh, a whole, whole lot of tunes that would make your foot go in spite of itself.

Summer nights, just at dusk, when it would be all still, you could hear him from far across the prairie. After he had done a lot of these "quick and devilish" airs he'd stop, and we'd know, just as if we'd been there to see, that he had run the fife through his hands a couple of times and put it away, and gone and got his old German flute with the one brass C-sharp key and the finger-holes all worn white. And then he'd play this here soft, sweet music that makes your throat all swell up and hurt you, and you sit and wish for something, you don't know what.

"Oh, father, dear father, come down,
Come down and open the door."

and

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"Fly away to my native land, sweet bird,
Fly away to my native land."

He'd always wind up with the old familiar words:

"Believe me if all those endearing young charms that I
gaze on so fondly to-day,"

because that was Aunt Becky's favorite. The summer after she died he didn't play on his fife at all, but one evening we heard him with his flute awhile. He ran a scale or two on it and then he began, "Believe me if all those endearing young charms," but he didn't get very far with it. He stopped. We listened for him to go on, but he never did. As we waited I heard my mother draw a kind of a long breath and sigh it out. After a little my father said, as if she had asked him something, "Yes, he thought an awful lot of Aunt Becky." The old man didn't live a great while after that.

I don't know why it is that I keep wandering from the subject so. Seems as if I couldn't stick to my text when I get to talking about the old times. You remember, though, that when the

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whole long line of torches got into Main Street you wondered why it didn't make everything as bright as day. They must have had a thicker kind of darkness at night in those times. It soaked up more light! You wouldn't believe!

It was only when they got right close to that you could see the tin cans of the torches wobbling in the crotches of the staves, and the red and white and blue oilcloth capes of the different companies: and only when they were right in front of Richardson's could you recognize the boys you knew walking along with their pas, holding hands with them, or else clinging to their cape-corners. Other boys' pas let them march; it was a funny thing you couldn't ever get to go. Mud up to your knees — nothing! You'd look where you were going.

But even if we could not march and go help our side win, we could cheer and wave our handkerchiefs and hope our side would win. It almost always did. It could all the time, but it got to be such a sure thing that sometimes the Republicans would say, "Oh, I guess I'll stay home and

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clean out the furnace. They don't need my vote," and that time the Democrats would win. They always voted. Sometimes they voted two or three times apiece, which is no fair. But that is a Democrat trick, and you've always got to be on the lookout for it. And if they won, why, there would be the dickens and all to pay. The weather would be so bad that the farmers wouldn't make more than half a crop; or else it would be so confoundedly good that they would raise too much, so that they couldn't get hardly anything for it. And there would always be hard times in business as soon as ever the Democrats got in. Sometimes the hard times would come just because the Democrats *wanted* to get in. The bare suspicion that there was the least show for them to elect anybody was enough to give commercial prosperity a hard chill and send it to bed with a hot brick to its feet. The Democratic legislatures and congresses would do the foolishhest things. You'd read about it in the *Examiner* and wonder how people could be so foolish. And the mystery deepened that nice men like Uncle Jack could go right

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along voting the Democratic ticket and upholding these fellows in trying to ruin the country. If they'd only stop taking their silly Democrat papers and read the *Examiner* they'd see it. They couldn't help but see it.

When we got older, so that we could sit up till nine o'clock, we went to the meetings in the Opry-house, where they explained all about it. It was a hardship to give up the splendid miles and miles of torches, and the funny transparencies, with their comical digs at the Democrats; but if we waited for all that the place would be full before we got there. One look at a Republican meeting and another look at a Democratic meeting should decide any fair-minded person which party he ought to belong to. At the Republican meeting, up on the stage where the table was, with the white pitcher of water and the glass tumbler, were the finest men in town. There was the President of the National Bank, who was dead down on the Greenback heresy. And old Judge Rodehaver would be right next to him. He is Probate Judge now. Before that he was County Clerk, and before that

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he was County Auditor, and before that he was — well, I guess he's always been in what you might call "public life." A fine-looking man, with thick, white hair and a clean-shaven face and the appearance of a Roman senator. And the Postmaster is there. He's a very able man they say. He knows better than anybody else in the county how to get out the vote. And Caleb Dyer is there. He is one of our leading citizens, having started from nothing, as you might say — an example to any ambitious young man who wants to rise in the world. He is a little, small, dried-up runt of a fellow with a gray goatee on his chin. He lives in the big fine house on North Main, the one with the cu-pa-lo on top of it. He owns a lot of property around town, and several farms, and every once in a while he gets another farm. What does he do? Why, he doesn't do *anything*. He's not that kind. He's a capitalist. He lends people money and takes a mortgage, and then when they can't pay up he gets the farm or whatever they gave for security. He's very "s'rood in business," if you know what that means.

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And there is Major Drew. He isn't really a major, but they call him that because he was in the war and looks exactly like a military man of high rank, with his white mustaches and imperial, his erect and soldierly carriage, and his loud, brusk voice. When the enemies of our country fired on Sumter, he promptly responded to the call of duty. I don't know for sure what branch of the service he was in, but he was one of those gallant men they call sutlers. You ought to hear him make the Decoration Day Speech. He's grand. He owns the woolen mill, and when the hands tried to get up a union, so that they could strike and gouge more wages out of him, he mighty soon put a stop to it. There's where his military training came in. No insubordination in the ranks. It was his business and he proposed to run it in his own way and not be dictated to by anybody. Why, if he went and paid them more wages they wouldn't be satisfied. They'd want more pretty soon. And they'd only spend it in beer. And if he cut their hours down to ten, that would only be so much more time for them to loaf around

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the street corners and pass remarks on the ladies that went by. When he was their age, before he got his start during the war, he worked fourteen and fifteen hours a day and thought nothing of it. And so would they, if they weren't so lazy and do-less. So he fired the ringleaders so quick it made their heads swim. That put a stop to their nonsense mighty sudden.

The people that you saw at the Republican meetings were of the better class, don't you know. Nice people, white-handed people with clean collars and pearly finger-nails; employers of labor who gave the common folk jobs and thus kept life in their bodies; store-keepers; all who frowned upon the saloon, and were so intimate with the druggist that he would let them come back where he made up the prescriptions. The Republican Party is the party of Progress, the party that has been in control since we have begun to make things by machinery and accumulate wealth so rapidly.

On the other hand the crowd at your Democratic meeting was composed of low, common, working people that applauded by "stomping"

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their feet and squalling "Hoo-ee!" They had on hickory shirts without any collars, except some few of the politicians who wore long-tailed black coats, black slouch hats, and narrow black string neckties. All of them chewed tobacco, the politicians using fine-cut and the hickory-shirt fellows navy plug. They left the Opry-house looking like a hog-pen. The hickory-shirt crowd not only had blue finger nails and calloused hands, but they bragged about it. "Horny-handed sons of toil," their speakers called them, and they cheered as if that were anything to their credit. "The great unwashed," was what the *Examiner* called them. They had no big bugs to sit up on their platform, only yo-haw farmers with their pants in their boots, saloon-keepers, and the lawyers that got what criminal practise there was going. When they weren't talking flub-dub about individual liberty (which meant for the rough element to have their beer whenever they wanted it), they were opposing the Republicans just out of pure contrariness, and sneering at them because they were nice people — "the God-and-morality party,"

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they called us. (I don't see that that is anything to be ashamed of.) They seemed out-of-date, behind the times. They seemed to belong to Andrew Jackson's day.

Andrew Jackson was all right, and the movement he headed was all right, for it took the management of the Government from the hands of the landlords and propertied class and put it into the hands of the small farmers and the men with little, hand-powered industries. But another revolution has occurred since then, the transfer of ruling authority into the hands of the railroad magnates and the big manufacturers, a transfer that began during the Great Rebellion, a period the Democrats do their best to ignore for good and sufficient reasons. The business interests of the country were just naturally afraid of the Democrats as reactionaries and Bourbons that never learned and never forgot. When Cleveland barely scraped through the first time he was elected, and it was doubtful if he would scrape through, the professor of moral philosophy in my college got down on his knees in the classroom and

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besought the Almighty to avert this terrible catastrophe from our beloved country. That shows you.

I hope, my Democratic friend, that I have got you good and riled. I hope you are just hopping mad, and ready to tear me limb from limb. That is what our great statesmen like to see. Anything but "apathy." Apathy is a terrible thing. Suppose you were at school and a boy came into the yard before the last bell rang with a big red apple in his jacket pocket that you figured would just about fit you. And suppose you should say to him. "Oh, looky! Looky at that funny bird up in the tree yonder! See him?" And suppose the boy was apathetic about funny birds up in trees, what chance would there be of your getting his big red apple without a fuss? It just spoils everything when people are apathetic about politics. And that's another symptom of the degeneracy of the age which we must all deplore. I have known Republicans of late to vote for a Democrat because they thought he was an honest man. It wasn't that way "back home." Party spirit ran

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high there. Why, I remember one time there was a Presidential campaign, and it looked as if there was a chance that the Democrats might get in and ruin the country. A young fellow I knew was a pretty good musician. He was a Republican and engaged to a Republican girl, but somehow or other he had Democratic friends. They were going to get up a glee club, and they asked him if he wouldn't coach them in some songs. He said he would, not thinking there would be any harm in it if he merely coached them and didn't actually sing, himself. Well, it just broke off the match, that's all. She cut him dead in the street; wouldn't have anything more to do with him.

When you have party spirit like that it simplifies things immensely, not only for the politicians but for the voters too. There's no need of you spraining your mind thinking what you ought to do. Just vote the straight ticket and that's all about it. Why, what does all this talk about a candidate's being honest amount to, anyhow? How are you going to tell whether a man's honest or not? Maybe he hasn't had a chance to

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be anything but honest. And what difference does it make to you whether he's honest or not, when he votes in the interest of his class and against the interest of your class? It comes to the same thing as far as you're concerned.

And I hope, too, my Republican friend, that you have seen that all the time that I was giving it to the Democrats so hot and heavy I was making what Brother John Warnock would call "mean, little insinuates" at you, too. If they're behind the times, why so are you. If they're still hurrahing for Andrew Jackson because he got manhood suffrage, why, so are you still hurrahing for Abraham Lincoln because he freed the slaves. The world keeps moving on. New occasions bring new duties. There's one more transfer of power has to be made. A big one — the biggest ever. The right to vote isn't all there is to liberty. There's more! The right to live and to bring up your children half-way decent anyhow, the right to have some little time to yourself, to be something besides a mere machine. All these great inventions, all these

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economics of production and distribution — we ought to be getting the good out of them. We aren't. Why not? Who is?

.

I hope I've stirred you up, whether you are a Republican or a Democrat. If I had to make you angry at me in order to stir you up, well and good. But I'd rather you wouldn't stay pouty with me very long. I meant it only to be a boyish quarrel, so that the next time I came past your house and yodeled, you'd grab your books and slate and come tearing out to meet me.

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1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

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OF the old-time home the Parlor was the pinnacle and blossom. How completely that has faded and gone is shown by the fact that the very name of "parlor" seems kind of old-fashioned and behind the times. Drawing-room, reception-hall, library, but not parlor. In my day I have seen it depart. Even when I was a little boy, I remember, its petals were kind o' droopy compared with their stiff rigidity out at Aunt Katy's.

Aunt Katy was a step-relation twice removed. She wore caps with wide strings untied and floating, which identifies her period; mine was that wherein "The Pilgrim's Progress" was still a rattling good adventure story, ere ever Antelope Abe had escaped from the circle of bloodthirsty redskins, who sought to cut his raw young heart out, by the ingenious device of turning handsprings and kicking Flying Arrow right spang in the nose.

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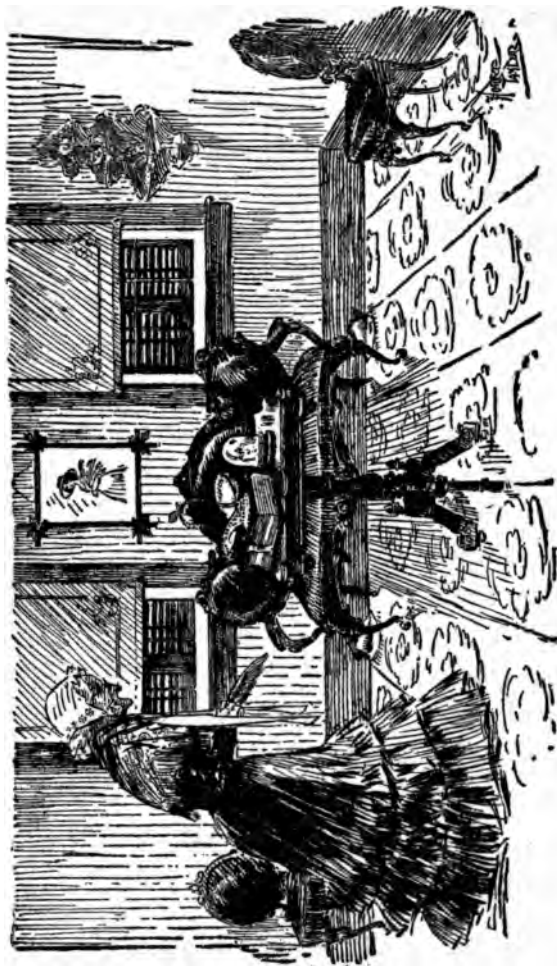
“‘Ugh!’ exclaimed the discomfited chieftain as the brave boy —”

But I digress.

Aunt Katy had a parlor. The inquisitiveness of youth elicited this fact, which seemed to be of the nature of a guilty secret, for the motto was: “Keep it dark.” When in later years I encountered the line in the carol about the three kings of Orient,

Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume

I understood at once how a perfume can be bitter, for I remember the day I first stepped into Aunt Katy's parlor and, stealthily closing the door behind me, inhaled the chill, strange aroma — not aroma, not scent, not odor; these names are all too gross and heavy-handed for that faint, elusive quality that the air had. In the cellar below for years and years there had been apples stored away. Was it the ghosts of these apples, since gone to their long home? Was it the pale spook of lavender from the clothes-press in the spare bedroom off the parlor? Was it the trapped essences of



Its petals were kind of droopy compared with their stiffness out at Aunt Katy's.

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cakes and pies and quince preserves that had thinly crept in through the door-crack and sought in vain to find their way out? Was it all these together, or was it that the air, prisoned and shut away from the glad light of day, had turned sad and regretful, calling to mind the times when it had whooped and screamed across all the white fields that lay between Aunt Katy's house and the far country of the Northern Star; when it had played ring-around-the-rosy with the romping leaves; when it had rumpled the white petticoats of modest poplars, the while the thunder growled its surly disapproval of such carryings-on; when it had swooned in ecstasy over the blossoming apple-trees?

It was lonely for the air in Aunt Katy's parlor, waiting, waiting. Sometimes a lone fly, arrived there by some miracle impossible to believe, buzzed on the pane behind the thick blue paper shades with a blast so loud it seemed a trombone's. And presently the fly died out of pure ennui and lonesomeness. The air crept languidly about the room, with a motion to which a clock-hand's were

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hurried and impetuous, vainly seeking an exit. There were only two occasions whereon it might be free to come and go. One of them was past forever. The nest was empty; the birds were flown. There was none left to "stand up" now with anybody while Brother Longenecker read the binding words and glad dishes rattled in the dining-room. All that the poor, pale air in Aunt Katy's parlor had to look forward to was the day when horses and buggies would be hitched to the front fence as if Aunt Katy's were the meeting-house, and when the folks would have their Sunday clothes on, although it was a week-day, and would speak subduedly and with many a sigh such words as: "A shock of corn fully ripe," and "Oh, well, she's better off, I s'pose," and "We all have to go when our time comes," and "D'ye reckon Barzillai'll come in for his sheer, after all?"

A narrow strip of land, the North Atlantic seaboard not only considers itself (1) a part of the United States, but also that is (2) *the* United States, the mountain-chain to the westward of it



"D'ye reckon Barzillai'll come in for his sheer, after all?"

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being practically the "take-off" for the jumping-off place. Against the pestilential heresy of Proposition Number 2 I wish to raise my feeble typewriter in earnest protest. In the matter of Proposition Number 1, I am open to argument. Technically speaking, I suppose I'll have to grant that the North Atlantic States are *pro forma* in the Union; aside from the legal fiction, I deny that the inhabitants thereof are our kind of folks at all. For peace' sake, we put up with them; we listen to what they have to say, and try hard to remember our manners and not let them know what we think of them. But there comes a time (and this is such a time) when the truth must come out. If you must know, we think they're scarcely human, let alone fellow-citizens. Americans? Not by a jugful. They may think so, but they're not. They can't even speak the language. "Quite some snow!" Is that *our* mother-tongue? Is "burla" comprehensible to reasoning beings? That's what they say when they mean "boiler." They call a swing a "scup." The land! And claim kin with *us*! *They* may claim it.

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In that arrogant and stuck-up land I s'pose they do not prize the Parlor, because they've always had it. I reckon when the moving-vans drove up from the water-front with the Pilgrim Fathers' household goods aboard, there were haircloth sofas, and marble-topped center-tables, and real hand-painted pictures with which to dike out the Parlor, or what they, like enough, called the "best rum"; but it wasn't so in the real United States, where the people come from that amount to something. I remember Aunt Katy telling about how it was when she married her first husband and moved up from Clark County. Her man had to go to mill, which took him the best part of two days, and there was she, all alone, in a log cabin that hadn't any door except a quilt hung up. And she could hear the wolves howling over there in the woods where the Stillwell place is now.

"Tell some more, Aunt Katy. Tell about bears. Did you ever see a bear, Aunt Katy? You did? Wasn't you afraid it would bite?"

And Aunt Katy told about a lady she knew that killed a bear with the ax. All by herself, so she

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did. Her husband was afraid, and run and hid.
“Hit him ag’in, Polly!” he’d holler.

“And, one time, when Pap was alive —”
But, laws-a-me! I’ll never get through if I keep
wandering from my text this way.

However, you can see that in a one-room cabin
with a floor of hewed-out slabs, a quilt hung up
for a door, and mud chinking between the logs —
they still have some of these old cabins back home,
and use ’em for cow-houses — there wasn’t much
of a chance for a Parlor. The country had to be
settled up, and folks had to make arrangements
to sleep, and get dough to put in the bake-kettle
and cover up with coals, and meat to hang up in
front of the fireplace to roast, before they began
to put on style. *First the essentials of existence,*
then Art.

I suppose it is up to me now to define Art.
Just how dangerous it is to attempt this, especially
when the word is spelled with a capital A, I trust
I am fully sensible. It is a sort of intellectual
shooing the chickens out of the garden through a
narrow gate. While you are getting one through

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(while you are delimiting one field of Art) the others are back among the cabbages tenfold more the children of the Bad Place than they were before. And while you are chasing them, the one chicken comes through the gate again. Also, the job is complicated by the row of distinguished citizens leaning on the garden fence, sneering at the futility of all your efforts, most of them in Windsor ties, velvet jackets, and painty pants, with a sprinkling of those whose inky middle finger betrays the fact that they are not artists, but chroniclers of artists' doings. Nevertheless, I am going to try it if I break a trace.

Art is a subject of which we can all truly say: "I know well enough what it is, but I can't express myself."

I think I can come a little closer to the bull's eye than that. I should say: *Art is what you would put in the Parlor.*

For instance: The almanac, hung by a string by its northwest corner to the mantel, was in the sitting-room. But Fox's "Book of Martyrs" (wherein were pictures of folks undergoing the

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same rough-house for conscience' sake that had evidently been the unhappy fate of the gentleman on the second page of the almanac) was in the Parlor at Aunt Katy's. Her Testament, worn and brown and tattered at the place where the good words are that begin: "Let not your heart be troubled," was in the window of the sitting-room. The big pictorial Bible, bought of a student who was working his way through college and expected to become a minister of the Gospel, but found that it paid better to sell Bibles on subscription, was on the center-table in the Parlor. It was a magnificent affair weighing eighteen pounds, had lids embossed in high and scooped-out curves, was "profusely embellished with high-class reproductions of the Old Masters," and had enormous ornamental initial letters to each chapter. There was one big A that was a tent, and a soldier was throwing a spear, the spear making the crosspiece of the A. It looked interesting, but the reading said, "And these are the names of the men that shall stand with you: of the tribe of Reuben; Elizur the son of Shedeur. Of Simeon; She-

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lumiel the son of Zurishaddai —" Oh, a whole lot more like that, and nothing about the man in the tent and what he was going to do with the spear.



No good at all for chewing-wax.

Aunt Katy's work-basket, with her spools of thread, and papers of needles, her scissors, and the ball of beeswax (no good at all for chewing-wax; it crumbs up so in the mouth), was in the sitting-room. But the alum basket was in the

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Parlor, as befitted its station as a Work of Art.

To begin with, it was a basket of corn-husks, deftly woven and fashioned to look like those in the steel engraving frontispieces of the *Ladies' Repository*, wherein girls in low-neck-and-short-sleeve dresses, gathered at the waist and made full in the skirt, without a smidgen of trimming or ruffles, sit on a mossy bank holding this kind of a flaring, shallow, and spilly basket full of pretty posies. Also the little bits of girls in the kind of pictures in the Department for the Young, the ones that wear white stockings and slippers, held on by tapes crossed over their extremely narrow insteps, carried this kind of a basket with flowers in it, unless they held a watering-pot over a flower-bed fenced in with little hoops. If those little girls weren't all dead and gone by this time, I should hesitate to add what I am going to; but they had on short skirts widely buoyed out by — I feel so sort of red in the face and bashful — what shall I call 'em? Let me see. Trouserines would be a good name. Very wide and full they were, and came down nearly to the ankles in

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points that were all punched full of round holes. I have heard say that these confections were tied on at the knee. Fancy!

You know what alum is that you get at the drug-store. It's good when your store-teeth don't fit right and hurt your month, or if you are learning to play the guitar and your fingers get sore at the tips. Dip 'em into alum-water, and it toughens them so you can twang away all day and never feel it. And I think they use, it, too, when they put up these little cucumber pickles, but I won't be sure. Well, anyways, you take a good deal of this alum and some water and cook them together till they're done. I don't remember now how you tell that. . . . No, I don't think you use a broom-straw; as I recollect, that's for cake. But when the stuff is done, you put the corn-husk basket in it and put it away somewhere in a still place where nothing will bother it. As the hot liquor cools, the alum settles on the basket, and in a few days the graceful, curving lines of the basket are all hidden by sharp-pointed, clear chunks of alum, most beautiful to behold. The



There were haircloth sofas and marble-topped tables.

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last time, though, that I saw Aunt Katy's alum basket, its glory was departing. Some of the crystals had come away, betraying the sordid substructure of corn-husk, and such as remained were dusty and had lost their pristine ruggedness of contour. Too many pink tongues had been surreptitiously extended in the pursuit of trustworthy information as to whether it tasted as much like rock-candy as it looked.

Up in Aunt Katy's garret hung bunches of boneset (the tea of which will cure 'most anything, or ought to, for it's bitter enough), sage, pennyroyal, mint, catnip — I don't know what all kinds of "yarbs," good to make the dinner smell good, or to stew up in a tin cup on the back of the stove when anybody about the house was grunty. These were useful, don't you see? In the Parlor, on a black velvet stand on the marble-topped center-table, covered with a glass bell, was another "yarb," which could by no possibility be of the least account. It was a Work of Art. The plant had been cast into scalding water and left there until its green flesh had come off its poor lit-

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tle bones, which had then been bleached to snowy whiteness and fastened up for exhibition as a "skeletonized plant." From what I hear it must have taken particular skill to get it to look right.

We are now in a position to generalize still further on Art. Art is what you would put in the Parlor; and you would put in the Parlor that which is of no earthly account but has had as much skill and time put on it as if it were. Also, this skill and time must be plainly apparent. It must advertise that the person creating it could do a first-rate job of useful work if he had a mind to, but that he doesn't have to, being a peg above that station of life.

As a sort of radio-active energy, Art percolated through the walls of the Parlor backward through the house — the kitchen, which was the most useful room, getting least of those enlivening and beautifying rays. There the rag carpet was a hit-or-miss. In the sitting-room red and yellow and blue stripes with their gay chains did what they could to dispel the horrid thought that Aunt Katy was using up her old clothes, and her three dead hus-

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bands' old clothes, and all the rags she could lay her hands on honestly to cut up into strips and sew together, end to end, that she might have something to cover the floor and keep it warm. But in the Parlor, entirely free from the least suspicion of economy or usefulness, was a beautiful ingrain of such reds and greens that I deny the imputation that the shades were drawn to keep the sun from fading them. That was done, not out of consideration for the ingrain, but for the sun; the colors would have hurt his eyes and likely put him out of business.

Similarly with the quilts about the house. Deeply do I regret my ignorance of all the different patterns of quilts. The Log Cabin I know, the Eight-pointed Star I know, the Hen and Chickens, and the Mexican Feather; but when I go out in company and the conversation turns on quilts, I have to sit there with my jaw hanging, and not a word out of me because I don't want to let on how green I am. But this much I can safely say: that the quilts that were meant for use, and where company wasn't supposed to look, were made up

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of scraps, this from Adoniram's "wammus," and that from Trypheny's "tier," and t'other from



Her husband was afraid.

the old blue dress that faded so; whereas the quilt upon the bed in the spare bedroom off the Parlor was made out of calico bought a-purpose. I wish I could show you one such, pieced so long ago

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that the frail fingers which made those fine and even stitches are now fully restored to the earth from whence they came. But the colors, printed in another age, as you might say, are just as bright to-day as ever. As for the weavers of old blue-and-white bedspreads with their pretty patterns, I suppose they have clean vanished from the earth. I have one that says in the corner: "Pyna Rose, Wove by Joseph Buechel, 1847." I wonder what he'd think to find it a portière, a sort of curio, something they don't have nowadays.

If they don't have such colors in ingrain carpets and in calicos as they used to have, neither do they have them in pictures. I don't mean hand-painted pictures, but the colored lithographs that used to be before steel engravings with their cool grays conferred distinction on the Parlor. I don't mean chromos, either; I mean the real old lithographs, published by Currier & Ives, of Nassau Street, New York City. When you looked upon those pictures you realized that "Gotham" could not be so utterly and entirely a wicked city as was portrayed in "Sunshine and Shadow of

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New York," all about Harry Hill's, and the-ay-ters, and the Five Points, where they would knock you down as quick as look at you, and take your pocketbook away from you, and all like that. There must have been some nice people there; at any rate, Mr. Currier and Mr. Ives must have been nice people, or they wouldn't and couldn't have made such nice pictures.

There was "Esther," for example, a fine-looking lady, in a short-waisted dress cut low in the neck, her hair done up high and a big shell comb to hold it, and three large, fat curls, glossy like stovepipe hats, hanging in front of each ear. And there was "General Winfield Scott," whose only fault was that his hair was a deep blue, like the ocean wave. And there was "The Sale of the Pet Lamb," which deplored the commercial spirit of the age, for it depicted in startling colors the greed for gold that would actuate an inhuman parent to sell to a cold-hearted butcher a household pet, in spite of the obvious fact that the three children of the said household, each arrayed in a red, yellow, or blue frock, were weeping

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copiously into a handkerchief of the same color as their respective frock. And when I use the expression "startling colors," pray do not mistake it for a flower of rhetoric. The colors were startling. Never were such reds, so red and inflammatory, such blues, so like Italian skies, such yellows, so "yaller."

It was of another product of these purveyors of Art that Christina Moots told, when she celebrated the glories of Mrs. Hanks's Parlor. Being "Pennsylvany Dutch," she was a little mixed as to the genders of personal pronouns, but she knew what she liked in Art, for she declared, "Ach, my! Such a pretty picture she has hangin' up! All about Chesus an' her mammy."

Female beauty, historical portraiture, and moral and religious sentiment had their appeals, but no true American (by which I mean an American boy) could gaze unmoved upon another picture from the gifted hands of Mr. Currier and Mr. Ives. I now refer to the Work of Art entitled: "The Gallant Charge of the Kentucky Cavalry under Colonel Marshall at the Battle of Buena

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Vista." Oh, say! Now, that was all right. Horses, you know, United States horses and Mexican horses charging at each other lickety-split, and our brave heroes with their s-words slashing at the darn Mexicans, who don't fight fair at all, consarn their pictures! Whaddy you think? They had big, long spears that they poked our fellows with, so that they could run a spear clear through a United Stateser and have it come out at his back (unless it got caught on a rib, of course) before he could get close enough with his s-word to haggle up the Mexican's features. Do you call that fair? Well, I don't. It didn't say on the picture how it all came out, but our side won; it always does, because we're always right, and always fighting for liberty; but the way they did it, I guess, was this: Now, s'posin' I was the United States man and you were the Mexican man. And you'd go to stick me with your spear. And I'd grab a-holt of it just like this, and kind of pull you along, changing my hold on your spear, till I got you close up to me, and then I'd hit you a clout, just like that! Oh, excuse me! I didn't

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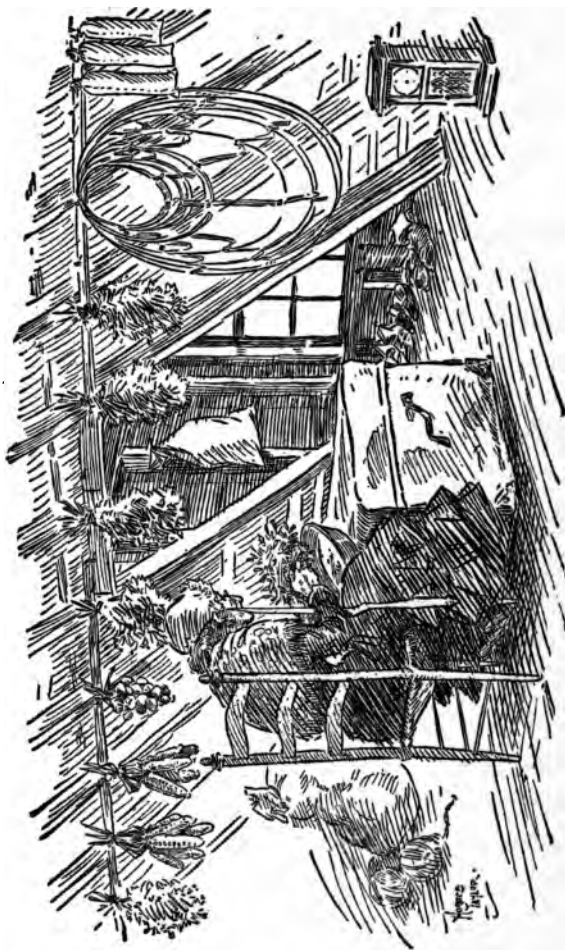
go to hurt you. I was just trying to show you how it was. Why! Does your nose bleed as easy as all that?

But the appeal of the primary colors, real red, and real blue, and real "yaller," is too direct, and in the process of time "Esther" and "The Sale of the Pet Lamb" and "The Gallant Charge of the Kentucky Cavalry under Colonel Marshall at the Battle of Buena Vista" drifted back into the sitting-room and the kitchen even, before the cold-toed onslaught of the high-class steel engraving. When I gaze upon a steel engraving I feel guiltily conscious of my lowly beginnings. I am reminded that I say, "I reckon so," unless I am very careful, when I should say, "I presume so." I was never compelled when I was little to go to dancing-school, never forced to sit on a piano-stool and drudge at Richardson's School for the Piano-forte (to this day I can scarcely remember that it's thumb under for F in the right hand). I never had early advantages, and the steel engraving looks over my head with the cold hauteur of the better classes who do not

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know that common folks exist. Far, far above my rank in life are those who have "Washington and his Generals" and "Lincoln and his Cabinet" in their parlors, the latter especially interesting on account of Mr. Seward, who seems to be wondering if there isn't gas escaping somewhere, or if the folks haven't had picked-up codfish lately.

There were no molten or graven images with their attendant moral obliquities about Aunt Katy's parlor, unless you choose to include a shiny china object upon the mantelpiece, which was believed and asserted to be a dog, but which one might have bowed down to and served with a clear conscience, for it was not the likeness of anything in the heaven above, or the earth beneath, or the waters under the earth. It was an ornament, just as were the conch-shells with their glossy, flesh-hued lining. Like them, the china dog demanded service, imperious care lest it be broken, meticulous wipings with a damp cloth, and ritual dustings. But there was a distinction between them. The china dog was of the very highest order of aristocracy; it rendered nothing in



I don't know what all kinds of "yarbs."

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and titles, including "The Hon. Mr. Justice" and "The Hon. Mr. Justice".

2. The second part of the document is a list of names and titles, including "The Hon. Mr. Justice" and "The Hon. Mr. Justice".

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exchange for all this care. It didn't even pretend to. It was exactly in the position of those who have "an independent income." The conch-shells were a grade below that. They had to make some slight effort to pay their way.

You must remember that while the people round about had never seen a body of water larger than Silver Lake, they were all descendants of seafolk. The sea was home to us, and so eager were we for any news from there that we maintained the conch-shells in high honor, because if we held them to the ear and harkened closely they told us what the sea said. We could hear the roar of waves which the shells transmitted to us authentically, having that strange power. We afterward found out it was but the rushing of our own blood we heard — the salt sea within us.

There are some that say the Parlor's doom was sealed the day a carpenter named Carhart first took notice that his accordion sounded louder and finer when the wind was sucked through the reeds instead of being squeezed through them. That meant the discovery of the parlor organ. Preg-

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nant event! Away went tinkling dulcimers to the garret — always out of tune, and poor things at the best. The parlor organ compelled the change of the piano from a luxury possible only to the rich into a necessity of life, within the reach of common folks. It made the piano a whole lot better instrument in the process of leveling down. Make a note of that. But whether Pa could afford a piano or had to get the cheaper organ, the shades in the Parlor had to be rolled up each day, and in cold weather there had to be a fire there, so that Elizabeth Jane could do her practising, thumb under for F in the right hand, thumb under for G in the left hand. And when Elizabeth Jane got so that she could play a “ piece ” without too many mistakes, it was fare ye well forever to the cold and aristocratic aloofness of the Parlor from the daily round, the common task.

Carhart helped; I grant you that. But I maintain that the disappearance of the Parlor was cosmic, elemental, the outworking of great economic forces, one manifestation of the spirit of the age which summons up on *quo warranto* proceedings

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every man-made institution, and would have it show cause why it should longer stay on the payroll. "What good are you?" it wants to know of every man and every set of men. The old-time aristocratic, idle, useless Parlor went because it was more bother than it was good. Take warning, all in the same line of business!

I never could see that the idling-place about a house had any better right to be prettier than the working-place about the house. Whether it was the First Isaiah or the Second Isaiah that wrote the fortieth chapter of the book of that name, I don't know or care. He had good ideas, whichever one he was, and when he says: "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low," I'm right with him, whether the sentiment apply to house-furnishing or — or — other matters.







